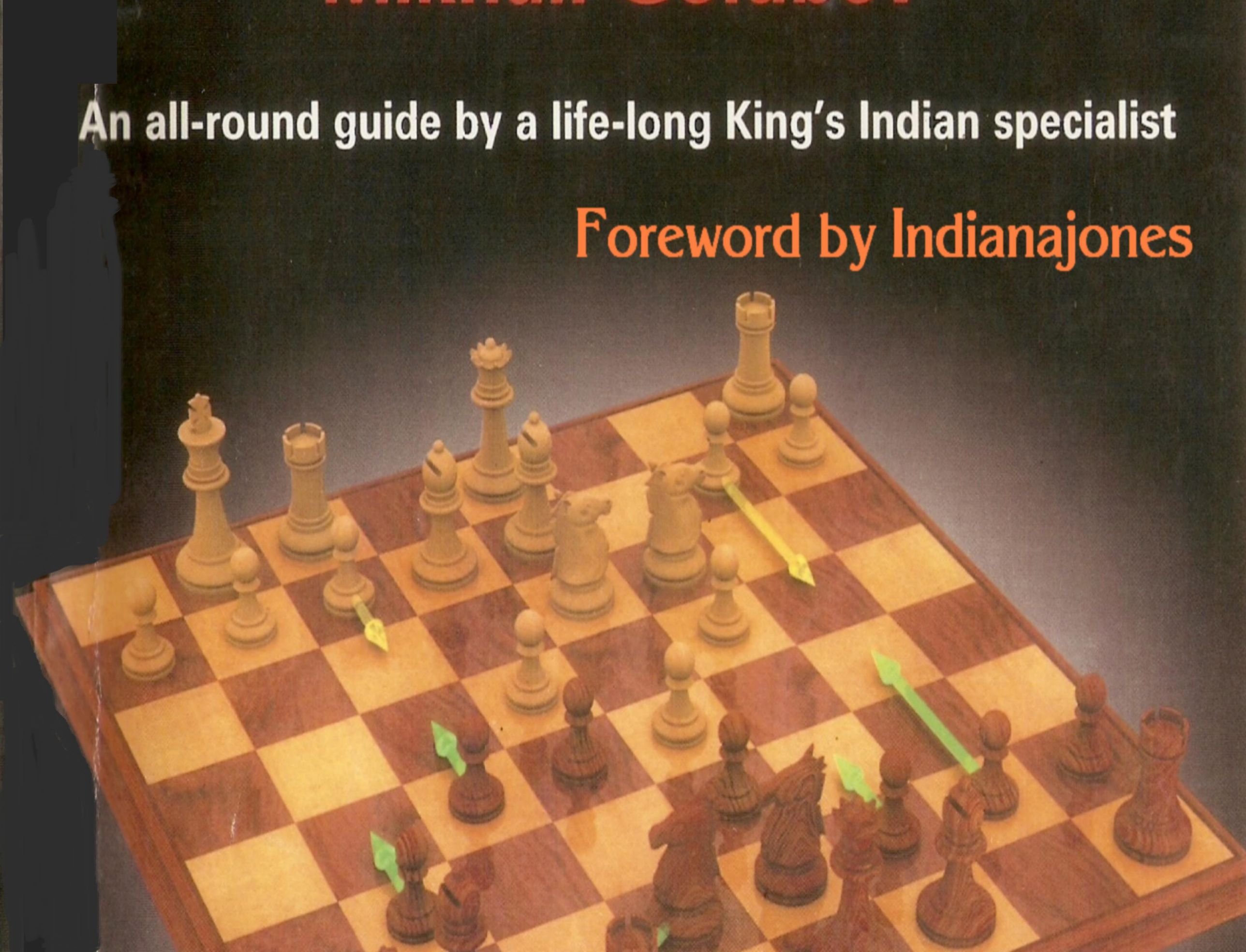
Understanding the King's Indian

Mikhail Golubev

An all-round guide by a life-long King's Indian specialist

Foreword by Indianajones



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Mikhail Golubev

GAMBIT

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Symbols

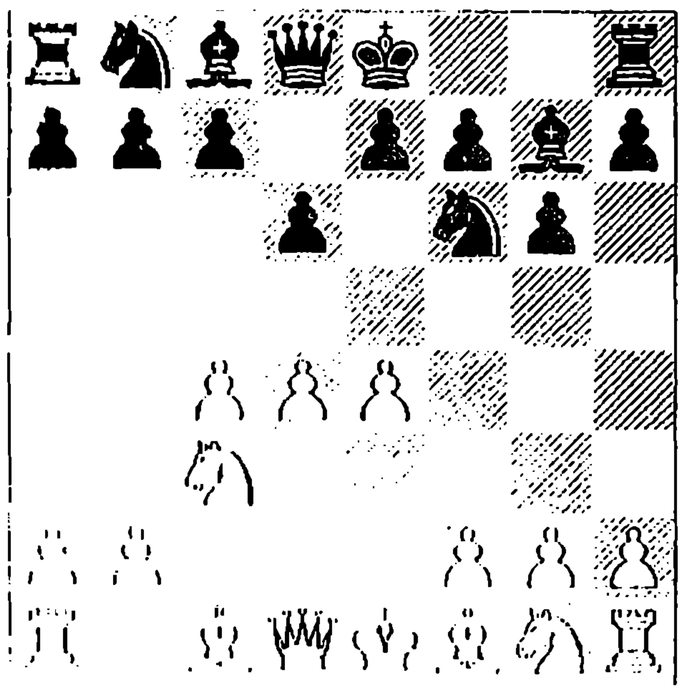
+	check
++	double check
#	checkmate
!!	brilliant move
!	good move
!?	interesting move
?!	dubious move
?	bad move
??	blunder
+–	White is winning
±	White is much better
±	White is slightly better
=	equal position
∓	Black is slightly better
∓	Black is much better
–+	Black is winning
Ch	championship
Cht	team championship
Wch	world championship
Wcht	world team championship
Ech	European championship
Echt	European team championship
ECC	European Clubs Cup
Ct	candidates event
IZ	interzonal event
Z	zonal event
OL	olympiad
jr	junior event
wom	women's event
rpd	rapidplay game
tt	team tournament
simul	game from simultaneous display
corr.	correspondence game
qual	qualifying event
sf	semi-final
1-0	the game ends in a win for White
½-½	the game ends in a draw
0-1	the game ends in a win for Black
(*n*)	*n*th match game
(D)	see next diagram

Introduction

The title of this book leaves no doubts that its topic is the King's Indian Defence – one of the most popular and controversial openings in modern chess. The author has used this opening with Black for more than 25 years. How I got started was slightly unusual. When I was 8 or 9, I played a training game with a friend from my chess club, Dima Novokhatko. After 1 c4 I noticed a certain weakening of the a1-h8 diagonal, and answered with 1...g6. The result of this game is not preserved in my memory, but probably it was positive enough, because I immediately started to seek information about 'my' opening and found that it was well-known as *Staroindiskaya zashchita* (the Russian name for the KID).

According to common classification, everything that begins with the moves **1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6** is called the 'King's Indian Defence', with the exception of cases when Black later continues ...d5, which is the Grünfeld Defence.

While the other KI lines (most importantly, the Pianchetto Variation with early g3) are covered in this book, most of material is devoted to the 'real' King's Indian lines which begin from **3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6** *(D)*. Note that 4...0-0!?, which once brought a brilliant victory to Bobby Fischer in a famous game against Letelier, alas, does not have much independent significance, because Black will normally play ...d6 soon enough in any case.



It is obvious from the diagram position that White, in accordance with opening principles, has occupied the centre with pawns and enjoys a territorial advantage. So, we should discuss what Black is doing, and why.

First, of all, he has developed his pieces in such a way that they cannot be profitably attacked (e4-e5 is out of the question for the moment), and at the same time they occupy active positions. The weakening of the a1-h8 diagonal, mentioned above, is not a joke but a real factor which, as Black hopes, could somehow compensate him for White's territorial achievements.

The most vulnerable square in White's centre is d4, which can be defended by pieces only. And, not surprisingly, two main basic ideas for Black are related to attacking the d4-pawn (after castling) by ...e5 or ...c5, which lead to two different classes of positions. After either ...e5 or ...c5, White has the choice between keeping the d4-pawn in its place (in this case the support of minor pieces is required), exchanging this pawn for Black's pawn on e5 (c5), or moving the pawn forward by d5, stepping into the opponent's side of the board and increasing White's territorial advantage.

In the book we shall deal with all these types of structures (also including lines where Black delays the assault on White's centre). Black's methods of counterplay will be illustrated separately in each of the opening lines, and general observations will always be made when possible.

There should be no doubt that the King's Indian is not only a highly provocative opening (White is invited to occupy the centre) but also not an easy one to play with the black side. "It's a difficult opening, positionally it's very difficult," wrote the most successful King's Indian player ever, Garry Kasparov, answering a question from a visitor at his website. The stakes are higher than in other openings and, basically, White gets some objective advantage from the

very beginning. (Well, I can try to describe the word 'advantage' as a situation where the opposite site would be satisfied with a draw offer.)

How valuable is White's objective advantage in the King's Indian? The correct answer to this question is beyond our knowledge. There are grandmasters (even those who often use the King's Indian as Black), who have the opinion that with perfect play White should win. For my part, I firmly believe that Black, if he plays perfectly, should not lose. Some players, on the other hand, simply do not worry about such abstract theoretical questions.

A more practical question is: what does Black get in return for voluntarily giving his opponent an obvious (even if slight) opening advantage? In fact, he gets quite a lot. By playing the King's Indian, Black, as a rule, avoids early simplifications, which allows him to keep the position complicated (due, not least, to such a banal factor as the number of pieces remaining on the board!).

So, the King's Indian is a perfect opening choice for players who aim to 'outcalculate' the opponent in a complicated struggle. The spirit of the King's Indian was best described in my memory by one of its regular practitioners, Croatian GM Cvitan. "I want to be dangerous", he said during the post-mortem analysis of one of his games.

Yes, Black's main strategy in the King's Indian is: to be dangerous, to keep the game as complicated as possible, and to deny his opponent the type of clear technical superiority that makes his position easy to handle in practice. Very importantly in the King's Indian (and this is atypical for most other openings) even in the case that Black makes a mistake and obtains an (objectively) bad position, he often, due the complexity of the situation on the board, preserves reasonable practical chances not only for a draw, but also for a win.

It is not therefore surprising that a list of regular King's Indian practitioners (say, those who have more than a hundred KI games as Black in ChessBase's *Mega Database 2005*) features most of the brightest and most ambitious chess fighters of the 20th century, including four world champions – Kasparov, Fischer, Tal and (maybe some will be surprised by this) Petrosian. Also: Shirov, J.Polgar, Geller, Stein, Bronstein, Najdorf, Gligorić, Gelfand, Nunn, Uhlmann, Smirin and many other great players. There are also young stars of the present day who may not have played as many KI games due to their age, but who use the opening regularly. It is enough to name Radjabov and Volokitin.

Here I should perhaps say a few words about the book's legitimacy (as I hold the view that opening books should be written by opening experts). I had some doubts when I started this work. Although according to the statistics I am among the 30 most active GM practitioners of the KI (168 games as Black in Mega 2005), it would seem strange to place my name alongside the illustrious players mentioned above, who are the great KI experts.

If most of the present King's Indian gurus (or Kasparov alone) were to reveal their secrets, I would possibly prefer to write not a book but a short article. In reality, however, the top players rarely show all what they know. They need their analysis for their practice. Here I have an advantage, because my career as a professional player at this moment is over (chess journalism, especially the work for *Chess Today*, which requires daily attention, occupies me more and more). So, I do not have any reason to hide anything – with exception of joint analysis with other players, which it would be improper to reveal without the agreement of the other party.

But also in this respect, I face fewer problems than most other grandmasters would face. In 2000, I helped the then very young Ruslan Ponomariov to include the King's Indian in his repertoire. His results (especially from the opening point of view) were quite good, but eventually Ruslan decided that the King's Indian did not fully suit his chess taste, and he stopped using it. He did not object to the inclusion of our analysis in this book.

Earlier, in 1996, thanks to efforts of Anatoly Karpov's coach IM Mikhail Podgaets who lives in Odessa, I was invited to a Karpov & Podgaets training session to help them prepare for the Karpov-Kamsky match. There our King's Indian analysis was limited in a very narrow direction, in a line that is not critical for current opening theory. I did not use our analysis of that specific line in this book, and have not indicated which line it was, but have provided an

honest assessment around the place where today's official theory ends.

This book on the King's Indian is my third writing attempt, after *Easy Guide to the Dragon* and *The Sicilian Sozin*. All three books were born in my cooperation with Gambit Publications (in the case of the Dragon in association with Everyman). Gambit's editor Graham Burgess, to whom I am endlessly grateful for his patience (alas, I seem unable to complete a major work within the agreed schedule) certainly has enough material to write a book entitled "Understanding Mikhail Golubev". I only can say in my defence that I would never have started any of these projects if in the beginning I had not been over-optimistic and unable to imagine the real amount of work required.

The key difference between this book and the two previous ones is in the size of the topic under consideration. The King's Indian database which I used (Mega 2005 games, joined with all other available material) consisted of more than 255,000 games (Kasparov was, perhaps, quite correct, when he stated that the KI "is not fresh any more"!), which makes it impossible to provide any complete, scientific coverage of the opening.

So, this book has a different concept. The coverage of all lines is based on my own games, while I have also provided additional theoretical material – enough to enable the reader to use the work as a repertoire book at the very least. I considered it important to offer a choice of different lines for Black wherever it was possible and appropriate. I believe that the best approach to playing the King's Indian is a flexible one. I would not like the situation when someone, knowing that his opponent owns my book, would be able to predict his opponent's first 20 moves. And, let's be completely honest, if I were able to construct a straightforward, perfect opening repertoire for Black (in the King's Indian or in any other opening), containing not even the slightest potential problem, I would have preferred to sell this repertoire to one of the participants in the San Luis world championship. (Well, this is a purely hypothetical idea – chess is alive, and White will always find ways to set new, unexplored problems for Black.)

I should say a little more about the selection of the main games for this book. It was not such a difficult task, because I had some clear criteria: quality, theoretical importance, instructiveness, and a balance in the number of games for each of the different lines. The additional theoretical material, as a rule, is placed not in introductions to chapters, but inside games (hence, some of games are a bit overloaded with notes – but the opposite approach would have had its own drawbacks).

References to many games, played by me and by other players, can be found inside the notes to the main games. In some cases I considered it appropriate to refer to blitz games, in those cases where I felt that the moves objectively deserved to be mentioned. I apologize to any chess purists who object to this. (I also apologize for cases where the moves are given without references to the actual games, which can be found in databases.) My attitude to the games that I lost was simple: I always included such games when they deserved it. Of the main games, you will find 25 games that were won by me, with 15 draws and 16 losses. So, to some extent these are selected games of myself and my opponents.

The notes to all games are new. Certainly, during the work I used my old notes from chess periodicals (*New in Chess*, *Informator*, *Chess Today*, etc.), but the differences and contradictions between the old and new notes are not analysed – it would be just a waste of space. Understandably, the notes to the older games were sometimes changed in more dramatic ways – before 1998 I did not make serious use of chess engines to help with analysis.

(On a separate note, I should mention that in 2001 ChessBase published a collection of surveys on the Classical King's Indian with "Glek/Golubev" in the annotator's field. In fact, I was responsible only for the E98-E99 part, i.e. the main line with 9 ♘e1.)

On the whole, I have written this book as a practical player rather than a theoretician. Primarily, I worked with all the material I have accumulated over the years from my own games and from work on my repertoire – and only then started to add supplementary material. The book can be considered as a personal introduction to the world of the King's Indian. I am sure that it will be useful for players who are interested in this opening, but the usefulness will

vary from player to player. There is no question that 'black' King's Indian players are my target audience and I am not even sure what to say to white players to encourage them to pay attention to my work. There is plenty of material here to help them to combat the KI with greater success... Perhaps I should say 'Please, never buy this book and allow us, the black KI players, to improve our statistics a bit!'.

The so-called Anti-King's Indians (i.e. lines where White does not play c4) are outside this book's scope. However, I feel that I should explain the point of the move-order 1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 d6 (instead of the usual 2...g6), which I use very often. In the past I experienced some problems dealing with the seemingly innocuous line 2...g6 3 ♗g5 (intending 4 ♘bd2, 5 e4 and 6 c3). Therefore I started to use 2...d6 as an antidote. Krivoshei-Golubev, Ukrainian jr Cht (Dnepropetrovsk) 1988 continued 3 ♗g5 ♘bd7 4 ♘bd2 e5 5 c3 ♗e7! 6 e4 0-0 7 ♗e2 h6! 8 ♗h4 exd4! 9 ♗xf6 (9 cxd4? ♘xe4! and Black wins the pawn) 9...♗xf6 10 ♘xd4 ♘b6 11 0-0 d5 12 ♗f3 c5 13 ♘e2 d4 14 cxd4 cxd4 15 ♘f4 d3 16 ♘b3 ♗xb2 17 ♖b1 ♗f6 18 ♕xd3 ♕xd3 19 ♘xd3 ♘c4. Black has a pleasant position with two bishops, and went on to win. Of course, the 2...d6 move-order has its own nuances and drawbacks. Thus, 3 g3 can be answered by 3...♘bd7!?, planning ...e5, ...c6 and ...e4. On the other hand, 3 ♘c3 forces Black to choose between the Philidor (3...♘bd7 4 e4 e5), the Pirc (3...g6 4 e4) and lines with an early ...♗g4, which may not be to the taste of all KI players. I shall not enter into deeper details here, but will add that the 1 ♘f3 d6 move-order (instead of 1...♘f6, the most normal move for KI players) is linked with the same idea (2 d4 ♘f6) and, more importantly, allows Black to use lines with an early ...f5 if White opts for the English set-up with d3. Black should also be ready to meet 2 e4. Then 2...c5 is the Sicilian.

I am planning to launch a weblog devoted to the book. Reviews and letters from readers can be discussed there. Please, check the news at my webpage *www.geocities.com/mikhail_golubev*, where my contact data is available as well.

And finally: good luck in your King's Indian adventures!

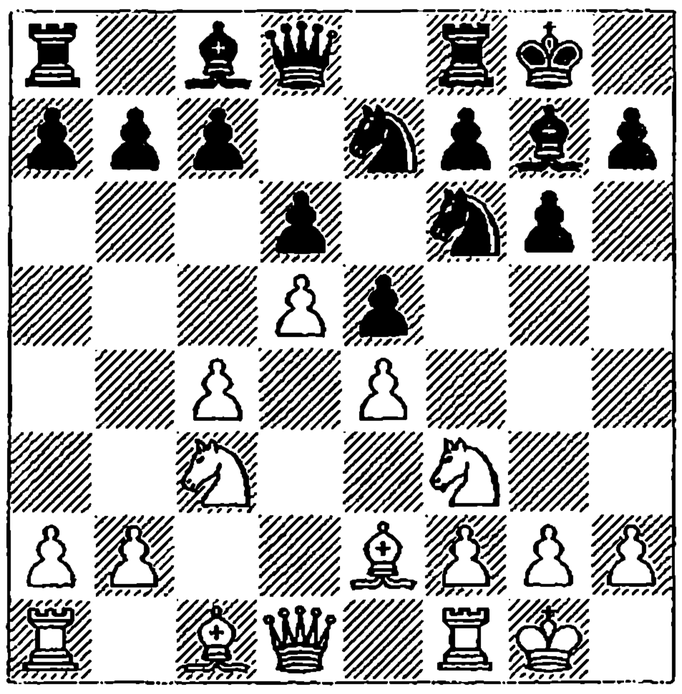
Mikhail Golubev
Odessa, December 2005

1 Classical: 9 ♘e1

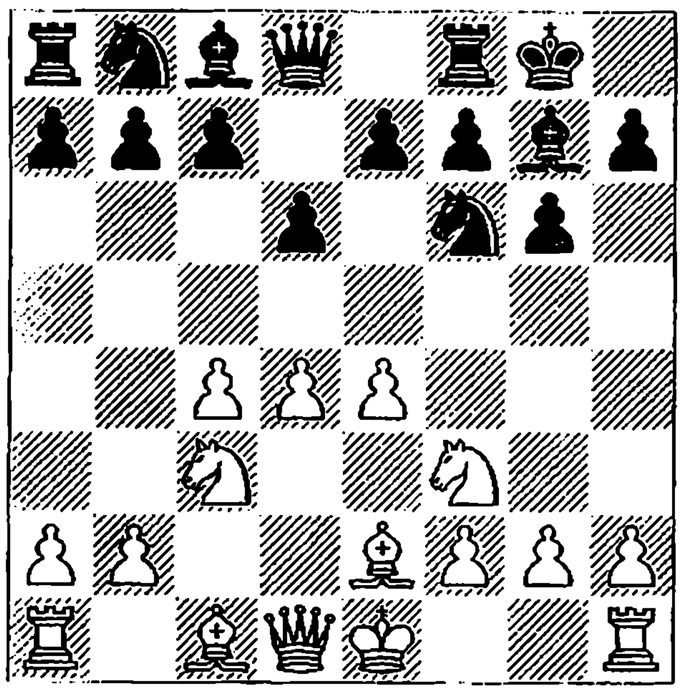
1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 5 ♘f3 0-0 6 ♗e2 *(D)*

White's last two moves define the Classical System. His 5th move hardly needs any explanation, and the developing move by the bishop which prepares castling is also perfectly natural. Note that another bishop move, 6 ♗d3, almost never occurs in high-level practice because Black immediately solves all his problems by 6...♗g4!, planning to attack White's centre by 7...♘c6.

W



B



6...e5! 7 0-0

This is the main continuation, but White has several important alternatives, which will be considered in Chapters 3-5. Here I shall only mention that after 7 dxe5 dxe5 8 ♕xd8 ♖xd8, 9 ♘xe5?! does not win the pawn. Black easily regains it by 9...♘xe4! and 10 ♘xf7?? (hoping for 10...♔xf7 11 ♘xe4) loses a piece to 10...♗xc3+ 11 bxc3 ♔xf7.

7...♘c6

A sharp method to attack White's centre, which provokes the advance of the d-pawn.

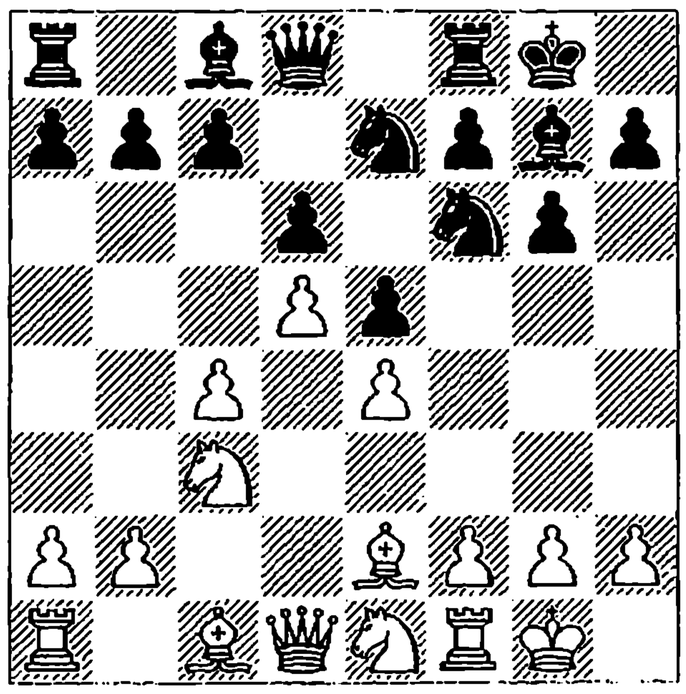
8 d5! ♘e7 *(D)*

We have reached a standard but fascinating position, which is the true heart of the King's Indian. Both sides can be happy with their achievements. White has gained a significant space advantage, and won some time, because Black was forced to retreat a knight, and to a not especially impressive position on e7. Black, in his turn, can now begin to prepare a counter-attack by ...f5 with the support of that awkwardly-placed knight which, if the fates allow, can later be transferred closer to White's king in just a few jumps. The position after 8...♘e7 is examined in this chapter and the next.

In the present chapter we shall deal with:

9 ♘e1 *(D)*

B



This multi-purpose retreat, first of all, prevents the active move 9...♘h5. At the same time, White prepares f3, which will firmly support his centre.

9...♘d7!

The problem with 9...♘e8 is that on e8 the black knight does not create any obstacles to White in his preparation of c5. From another point of view, we shall see that in some of the main lines after ...♘d7 Black is virtually obliged to undertake the manoeuvre ...♘d7-f6-e8 in

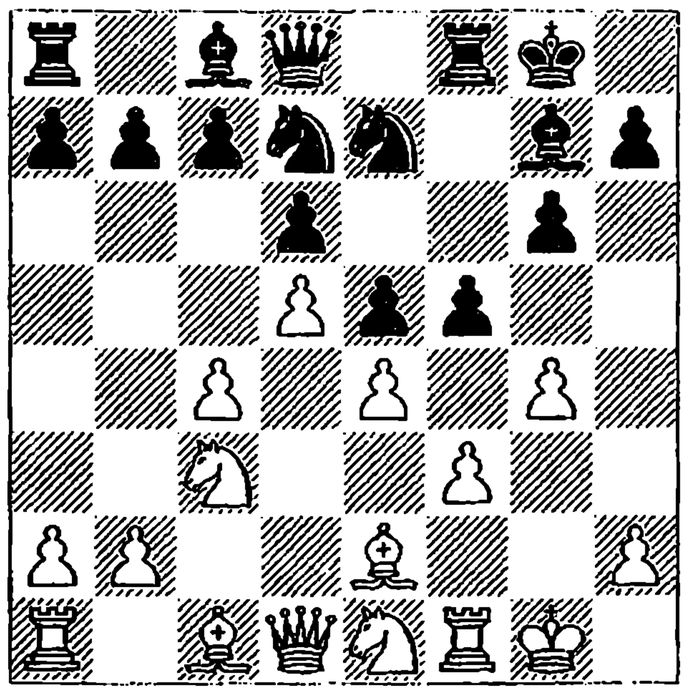
order to cover the c7-square after the opening of the c-file. Therefore, one might decide that by playing 9...♘e8 Black can win two full tempi in comparison with these lines. It is, however, an illusion. White can then employ attacking plans where not c7, but other squares on Black's queenside (the a7-pawn primarily), become his target: 10 ♗e3! f5 11 f3 f4 12 ♗f2 g5 13 c5! h5 (or 13...♘g6) 14 a4! with the initiative.

9...c5(?!) is unpleasantly met by 10 f4! and after 10...exf4 (or: 10...♘e8 11 ♘d3; 10...♘d7 11 f5!) 11 ♗xf4 White develops an initiative in the centre, because Black's forces are somewhat uncoordinated. I have never played 9...c5 in a normal game, but once tried it in a game against a computer in the last round of a rapid event. The quality of Black's play was rather terrible, but in the end the monster fell into a cheap trap: 9...c5 10 dxc6?! bxc6 11 b4 d5 12 ♗g5 d4?! 13 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 14 ♘a4 ♗g7 15 ♘c5 h5 16 f4!? exf4 17 ♘ed3 h4?! 18 ♖xf4 a5? 19 b5 cxb5 20 cxb5 a4 21 ♖b1 ♗h6 22 ♖f1 ♗e3+ 23 ♔h1 f5 24 ♗f3 fxe4 25 ♗xe4 ♘f5 26 ♗xa8?? (26 g4! wins) 26...♘g3+! 27 hxg3 hxg3 28 ♖xf8+ ♕xf8 29 ♗d5+ ♔h8 30 ♕h5+ gxh5 0-1 *Fritz5*-Golubev, Melle rpd 1998. It was a nice day for humankind.

Let's quickly return to 9...♘d7!, which is often called the 'Mar del Plata Variation' in honour of five relevant games played in the 1953 tournament in that Argentinean town. There are two very major lines after this move, which will be considered in the games to follow: 10 ♘d3 f5 11 ♗d2 ♘f6 12 f3 f4 13 c5 g5 and 10 ♗e3 f5 11 f3 f4 12 ♗f2 g5. Both of them are sharp, the second being sharper than the first. In both cases the centre is firmly closed. White is much stronger on the queenside, while Black is only a bit stronger on kingside. But Black is playing against a king. If he wishes to be successful, he must be ready to sacrifice material on both flanks! One more line that Black should be ready to meet is 10 f3 f5 11 g4!? *(D)*.

White is playing for domination, hoping to blockade the kingside. If he faces an unprepared opponent, he has good chances to succeed, because Black has many chances to go astray immediately. Thus, 11...f4?! 12 h4! allows White to close the kingside firmly – he plans to defend the h4-pawn by ♔g2 and ♖h1 while Black's ...h5 will always be met by g5!

B



and ...g5 will be met by h5!. Also wrong is 11...fxg4?! 12 fxg4, when White plans to prepare g5, leaving Black's e7-knight totally restricted. One more dubious for Black line is 11...h5?! 12 g5! h4 (otherwise White plays h4! himself) 13 ♘d3 f4 14 ♔h1 ♔f7 (planning to attack the g5-pawn by ...♖h8 – what else can Black do?) 15 c5! with advantage, Larsen-Tal, Bled Ct (1) 1965. Of some interest is 11...h6, with the idea of solving the problem with the knight by 12...fxg4 13 fxg4 g5! and 14...♘g6, but White can prevent the execution of this plan by 12 h4!.

The best approach for Black is to leave the kingside pawn-structure untouched for the time being, and to improve the position of his pieces first. He has two moves that have proved fully playable in practice. One of them is 11...♘f6. Arguably, the main continuation there is 12 ♘d3 c6 (creating tension on the queenside) 13 ♗e3 ♔h8 14 h3 b5!? 15 ♘b4 cxd5, when White cannot expect any real advantage.

Another good idea is 11...♔h8, preparing 12...♘g8. Then:

a) After 12 ♗e3 ♘g8 Black wants to continue with 13...♗h6 and if White prevents it by 13 ♕d2, then Black obtains decent chances after 13...f4! 14 ♗f2 h5 (or 14...♗f6).

b) 12 h4 ♘g8 (12...a5 13 ♘d3!?) 13 g5 f4 14 ♔g2 h6 15 ♖h1 ♖f7 16 ♘d3 ♗f8 17 ♕g1 is a tense line, where 17...♔g7!? 18 ♔f1 ♗e7, as in Cheparinov-Stellwagen, Amsterdam open 2005, seems to be playable for Black.

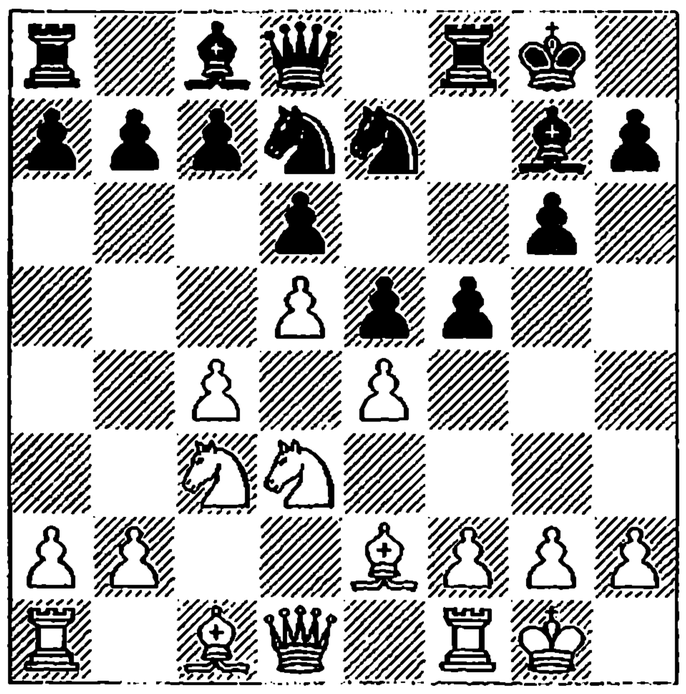
c) 12 ♘g2 ♘g8 13 h4 a5 (13...♗h6?! 14 g5!) 14 ♗e3 ♘c5 with approximately equal chances. This has been tested in a couple of dozen games since the stem game, Ghitescu-Dely, Zinnowitz 1967, where the players agreed a draw after 15 ♕c2!?.

Game 1
Ivanchuk – Golubev
Ukrainian jr Ch (Armiansk) 1983

1 d4

Even at the age of 14, Ivanchuk already had both 1 e4 and 1 d4 in his repertoire.

1...♘f6 2 ♘f3 g6 3 c4 ♗g7 4 ♘c3 0-0 5 e4 d6 6 ♗e2 e5 7 0-0 ♘c6 8 d5 ♘e7 9 ♘e1 ♘d7 10 ♘d3 f5 *(D)*



11 ♗d2

This is the most popular follow-up. White 'invites' Black to attack the e4-pawn one more time by removing his knight from d7, where it for the moment prevents White from advancing his c-pawn. The alternative for White is the more straightforward 11 f3 (see the next game).

White can also play 11 exf5 ♘xf5 (I prefer this capture over 11...gxf5 12 f4) 12 f3 ♘f6 13 ♘f2, where he firmly controls the important e4-square, but has no real advantage because Black is well developed. The interesting game M.Schulz-Webersberger, Bavaria 2003 continued 13...♗h6!? (solving the problem of the potentially bad dark-squared bishop) 14 ♗xh6 ♘xh6 15 g4!? (restricting Black's knight, which was ready to go to d4) 15...♘f7 16 ♕d2 h6! 17 ♔g2 ♘h7 18 ♗d3 and now the brave 18...♕h4 19 ♗xg6 ♘fg5! gave Black an initiative for the pawn. After a couple of overly materialistic moves by his opponent, he developed a crushing attack and won: 20 ♕d3 ♖xf3! 21 ♗xh7+ ♔h8 22 ♕e2? ♗xg4 23 ♗e4 ♖af8! 24 ♔g1 ♖xf2 25 ♖xf2 ♖xf2 0-1.

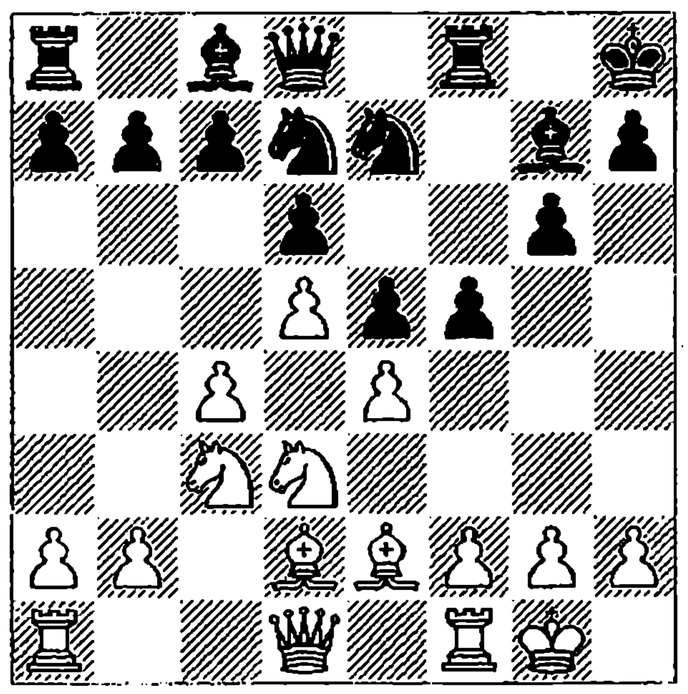
11...♘f6

This is Black's most natural and common answer, which usually leads to very sharp play. (There can hardly be anything wrong with it, but my encounter with Ivanchuk once again showed that entering a long theoretical line without proper knowledge is one of the safest ways to lose a game. The theory was already quite deeply developed in this line in 1983!)

Black has several possibilities to deviate from the main path at this early stage:

a) 11...fxe4!? 12 ♘xe4 ♘f5 is not really bad, but, in comparison with the 11 exf5 ♘xf5 line, White has a few extra tempi here and, as practice has shown, enjoys a slight advantage.

b) The modern 11...♔h8!? *(D)* is a flexible move, which prepares the possible advance of Black's c-pawn.



A kind of main line there is 12 ♖c1 ♘f6 13 f3 c5 (13...f4? would lead to an inferior version of the 11...♘f6 12 f3 f4 line) 14 ♖b1! (14 dxc6 ♘xc6 seems to be fully playable for Black) 14...f4 15 b4 b6 16 bxc5 bxc5 and then:

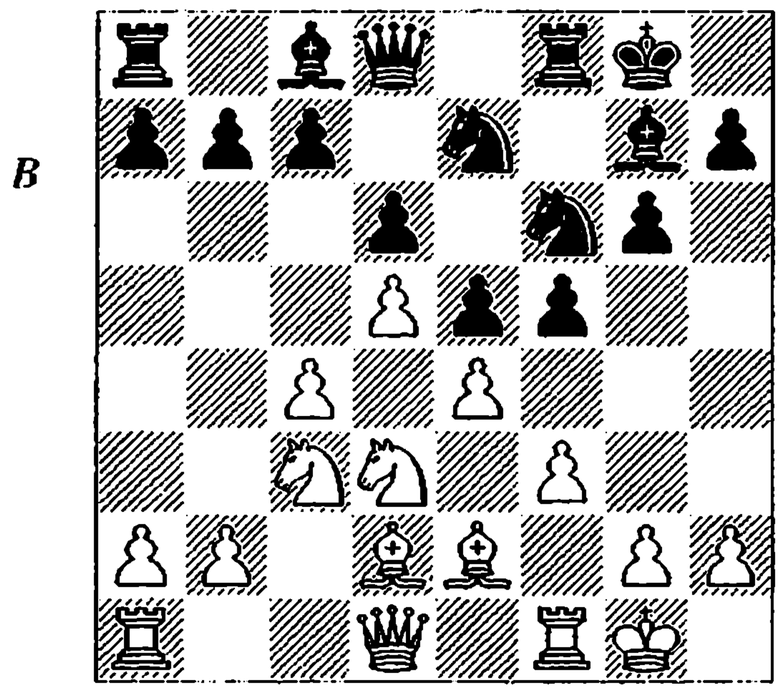
b1) If 17 g4, then instead of 17...g5 18 ♔f2, as in Ivanchuk-Radjabov, Dubai rpd 2002, Black can try 17...h5!? and now either 18 h3 ♘h7 or 18 g5 ♘h7 19 h4 ♘xg5 20 hxg5, when both 20...♘f5 21 ♖f2 ♕xg5+ 22 ♖g2 ♘g3 (Wahls) and 20...♘c6!? 21 ♖f2 ♘d4 (Van Wely) deserve attention. Of course, in both of these lines White could force a draw by capturing Black's knight on the 21st move, as Black must answer with 21...♕xg5+, etc.

b2) 17 g3!? g5 18 g4 h5 19 h3 ♖f7 20 ♔f2! (evacuating the king from the danger zone) 20...♗f8 21 ♔e1 and White's chances seem to be somewhat better, Lutz-Kindermann, Baden-Baden 1992.

c) The immediate 11...f4 has a very poor reputation because by playing 12 ♗g4 White ensures the exchange of Black's light-squared

bishop, the piece which is considered an essential component of Black's kingside attack. Still, the few available games played at grandmaster level have not yet confirmed that things are quite that simple; e.g., 12...g5 13 ♖c1 ♘g6 14 b4 ♘f6 15 ♗xc8 ♖xc8 16 f3 ♖f7 17 c5 ♗f8 18 c6 b6 19 g4 h5 20 h3 ♖h7 21 ♗e1 ♔f7 22 ♔g2 = ½-½ Gelfand-Tkachev, Groningen FIDE KO rpd 1997.

12 f3 *(D)*

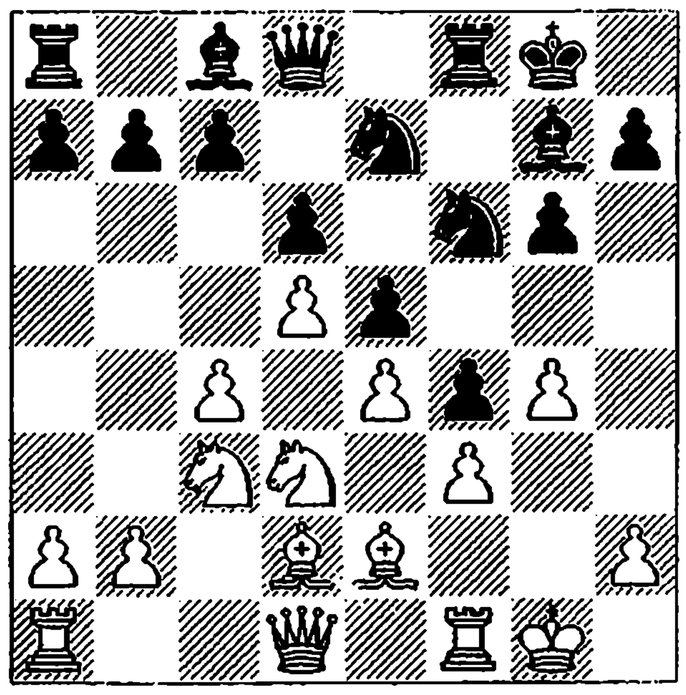


12...f4

As on the previous move, the most important deviation here is 12...♔h8!?, which leads to a position that may occur also via 11...♔h8 12 f3 ♘f6. Then 13 c5 can be answered by 13...c6! = (Black is well prepared to open the centre), and the main move 13 ♖c1 transposes to the line 11...♔h8 12 ♖c1 ♘f6 13 f3, which was considered above. In Nechaev-Golubev, Ukrainian open Ch (Yalta) 1996 White tried the rare 13 ♕c2!? and after 13...c6 14 b4 cxd5 15 cxd5 ♗d7 16 ♘f2 ♖c8 17 ♕d3 he obtained a position that is probably slightly better for him. The active but wrong attempt 17...♕b6?! (17...♘eg8!? should have been preferred) led to a loss of time for Black after the calm reply 18 a4! ♘h5 19 g3 f4 20 ♔g2! (20 g4 ♘g3) 20...fxg3 21 hxg3 ♘g8 22 a5 ♕d8. After 23 ♘g4!? ♘gf6 White, in his turn, went astray with 24 ♘b5? (24 ♖h1! was correct, with strong pressure), clearly underestimating Black's sacrifice 24...♘xg3! 25 ♔xg3 ♘h5+. The game continued 26 ♔h3 (the safer continuation 26 ♔g2 ♕h4 27 ♘xd6 leads to a draw after 27...♖c2 28 ♕xc2 or the crazy-looking 27...♖c3!? 28 ♕xc3 ♕g3+ 29 ♔h1 ♕h3+) 26...♘f4+ 27 ♗xf4 exf4 28 ♖ac1?! (28 ♔g2 ♕g5!) 28...♖xc1 29 ♖xc1 h5 (White's position is already very unpleasant) 30 ♘xd6 ♕g5!? 31 ♖g1? (31 ♖h1! was the last chance) 31...hxg4+ 32 fxg4 f3 33 ♗xf3 ♕f4 34 ♘xb7 ♗e5! 35 ♕e2 ♕h6+ 36 ♔g2 ♕h2+ 37 ♔f1 ♗b5 0-1.

13 c5

White's g4 advance is a move that Black should always be prepared to meet in the 9 ♘e1 system. Therefore we must examine 13 g4!? *(D)* in some detail:

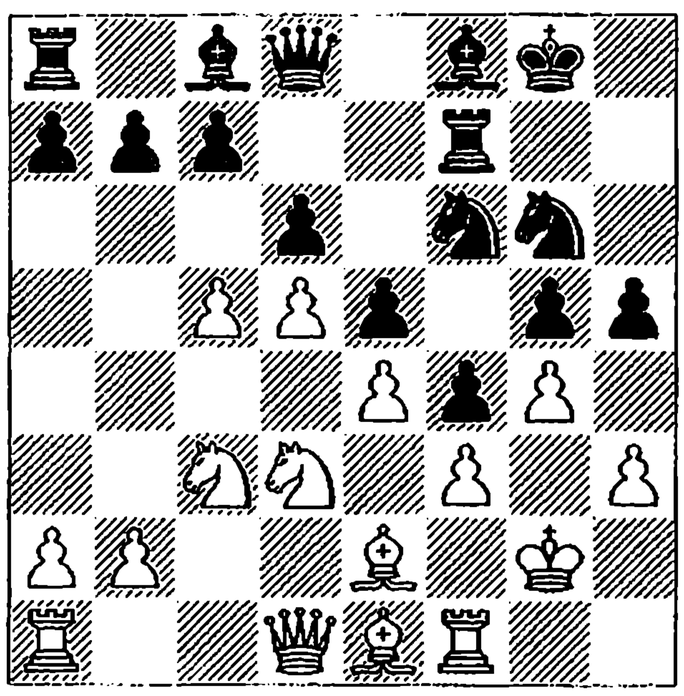


a) The typical draw-seeking knight sacrifice 13...h5 14 g5!? ♘h7 15 h4 ♘xg5 16 hxg5 ♘f5, which was tested several times, possibly does not give Black fully sufficient compensation after 17 ♖f2! ♕xg5+ 18 ♖g2 ♘g3 19 ♘f2.

b) The natural 13...fxg3 14 hxg3 has not brought Black good results in practice, because it is hard for him to organize any real play on the kingside. The game Chuchelov-Golubev, USSR Army Cht (Riga) 1988 continued 14...♕d7 15 ♘f2 ♘h5 16 ♔g2 a6 17 b4 with an initiative for White, even though later Black managed to create attacking chances with help from his opponent: 17...h6 18 c5 g5 19 cxd6 ♕xd6 20 ♘a4 b5 21 ♘c5 c6 22 a4 ♖b8 23 axb5 axb5 24 ♖a5 cxd5 25 ♗xb5 dxc4 26 ♘fxe4 ♕g6 27 ♗d3 ♘f5.

c) Black's main reply seems to be 13...g5. White then has a colossal territorial advantage and quite a firm position on the kingside, but it is hard for him to develop a serious initiative on the queenside and preserve the safety of his king at the same time. 14 ♗e1 (the brave 14 ♔f2!? has not yet been tested) 14...h5 15 h3 ♘g6 16 ♔g2 ♖f7 17 c5 ♗f8 *(D)* and then:

c1) It hardly makes sense for White to open the c-file quickly: 18 cxd6 cxd6 19 a4 ♗e7 and now 20 ♖c1 ♕f8 21 a5 ♗d8 22 b4 ♗d7 23 ♗f2 ♘h4+ 24 ♗xh4 gxh4 gave Black good chances



in Bareev-Belotti, Aosta 1989. Or 20 ♗f2 ♕f8!? 21 ♘b5 ♗d8!, when 22 ♘xa7?! hxg4 23 hxg4 ♗xg4! 24 fxg4 ♘xe4 25 ♘b5 ♘xf2! gives Black an attack.

c2) 18 b4 (trying to develop pressure gradually) 18...♗e7 (the immediate 18...♖h7 is also playable; in Kallai-Cvitan, Lenk open 1989, Black placed his rook on another file: 18...♗d7 19 ♖c1 ♖g7!? 20 a4 ♗e7 21 ♕b3 ♔h8 22 ♖h1 ♘h4+ 23 ♔f1 ♕g8 24 cxd6 cxd6 25 ♘b5 ♗xb5! 26 axb5 ♗d8 preparing ...♗b6 with good counterplay) 19 ♗f2 ♖h7 (19...♕f8!? 20 ♘b5 ♗d8 21 a4 ♗d7 is also possible, as in Gyimesi-Cvitan, Ticino open 1994) 20 ♖h1 ♔g7 (better than 20...♘h4+?! 21 ♗xh4 gxh4, which allows 22 b5! ♖g7 23 c6, Gyimesi-Videki, Budapest 1993) 21 ♕b3 (one of the ideas that is important for this line was shown by Black in P.Neumann-Szuk, Zagan U-18 Ech 1995: 21 a4 ♗d7 22 ♖c1 ♖h6 23 cxd6 cxd6 24 ♘b2 ♕h8! 25 ♘b5 ♕h7!, preparing 26...♖h8! with a strong attack) 21...♗d7 22 ♖ac1 a6! (22...♕h8?!, as in Hjartarson-Fedorowicz, Philadelphia open 1991, allows 23 c6! bxc6 24 dxc6 ♗xc6 25 ♕c4 – Grivas) 23 a4 hxg4 24 hxg4 ♘h4+ 25 ♗xh4 ♖xh4 26 ♖xh4 gxh4 and Black is not worse, Lukacs-Grivas, Budapest 1993.

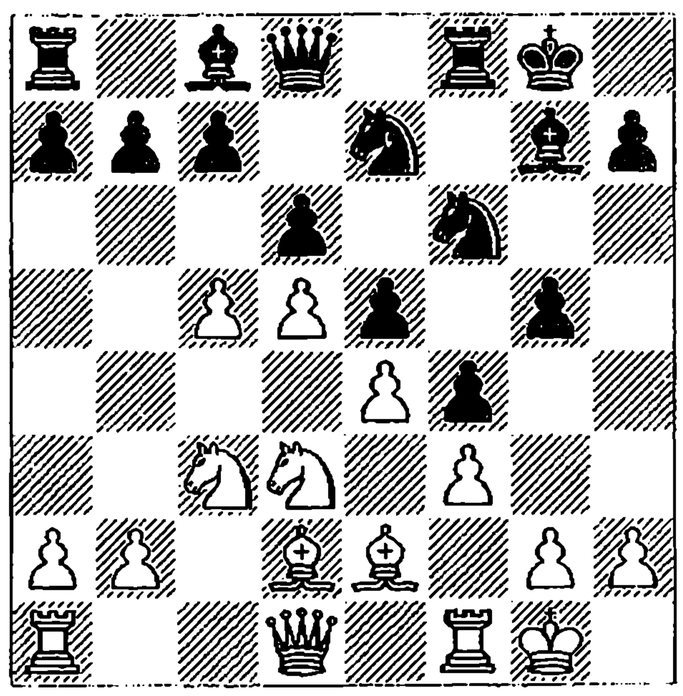
The play after 13 g4 g5 is not forced but it makes sense to look at these examples to become familiar with possible methods to deal with this kind of position.

13...g5 *(D)*

The goals of both sides are clear – they are starting to show their ambitions on opposing flanks.

14 ♖c1

The main and logical move – White aims to attack the vulnerable c7-square quickly. This



will make it necessary for Black to retreat his knight from f6 to e8.

Quite often, however, White uses an alternative plan and preserves the c1-square for the other rook: 14 cxd6 cxd6 15 ♘f2 (15 ♕c2? is premature because it allows 15...g4) 15...♘g6 16 ♕c2 h5 (threatening 17...g4) 17 h3 ♖f7 and now:

a) 18 ♖fc1. One difference from lines where White plays ♖ac1 is that here his ideas involve a4 and ♖a3 – the rook on a3 can be very useful for both attack and defence. Still, after White has removed his rook from f1, his kingside is slightly more vulnerable. In practice, Black has achieved decent results with an immediate pawn sacrifice: 18...g4!? 19 fxg4 hxg4 20 hxg4 ♘e8!? (planning ...♗f6-h4-g3), with double-edged play.

b) White can delay the attack on the c7-square with the almost unstudied 18 a4!?. Then 18...♘h4 19 ♖fc1 ♗f8 20 ♘b5 g4 (or 20...♘e8 21 ♘xa7) 21 ♘c7! is possibly riskier for Black than for White, so Black should perhaps play ...g4 one move earlier.

14 ♘b5 is a bit premature because 14...a6!? 15 ♘a3 g4, as in Gurgenidze-Tal, USSR Cht (Voroshilovgrad) 1955, gives Black interesting counterplay.

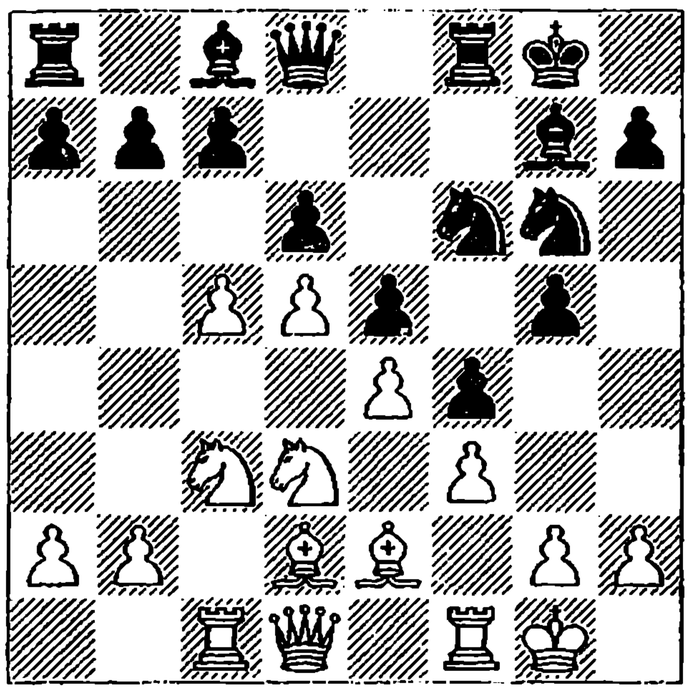
14 g4 makes less sense for White than on the previous move, because here Black has additional ideas with ...c6.

14...♘g6 *(D)*

15 cxd6

In a few recent games White managed to pose Black problems with the unusual 15 ♘b5!?. The point is that after 15...a6 White sacrifices his knight for two pawns: 16 cxd6! axb5 17 dxc7 with very good compensation. It is also hard to suggest for Black 15...g4 16 cxd6 cxd6

W



17 ♘c7, when White's positional threat of 18 ♘e6! is highly unpleasant and 17...g3 can be met by the calm 18 h3!, as in Svetushkin-Sofronie, Bucharest 1998. Therefore, Black can be advised to play 15...♖f7 16 ♗a5 (16 cxd6 cxd6 just transposes to the main lines with 15 cxd6) 16...b6. Here the sacrifice 17 cxd6!? bxa5 18 dxc7 leads to unclear play after 18...♕f8. If instead White plays 17 cxb6, then 17...axb6!? 18 ♗e1 g4, as in Shariyazdanov-Cherniaev, Russian Cht (Togliatti) 2003, looks reasonable for Black. 17...cxb6 18 ♗b4 ♗f8 is more problematic, but at least the straightforward 19 ♖c6!? ♘e8 20 ♕b3 a6 21 ♕a3, which occurred in Rabar-Udovčić, Yugoslav Ch (Sombor) 1957, does not give White much if Black defends his d6-pawn by 21...♖f6!.

15...cxd6 16 ♘b5 ♖f7

If 16...♕b6+?! 17 ♘f2 g4 18 ♘c7 ♖b8, White can get an advantage by exchanging the queens with 19 ♕b3!?.

17 ♕c2 ♘e8!

Naturally, Black would prefer to do without this retreat, but there is little choice. 17...g4 18 ♘c7 gxf3 19 gxf3 ♗h3 (Larsen-Tal, Eersel Ct playoff (5) 1969) 20 ♘e6! is considered to be in White's favour. Maybe Black's bishop on h3 is worth a rook, but White's knight on e6 is worth more than a rook!

18 a4

It is hard for White to make progress on the queenside without this advance. Note that 18 ♘xa7?? is a blunder losing a knight after 18...♕b6+.

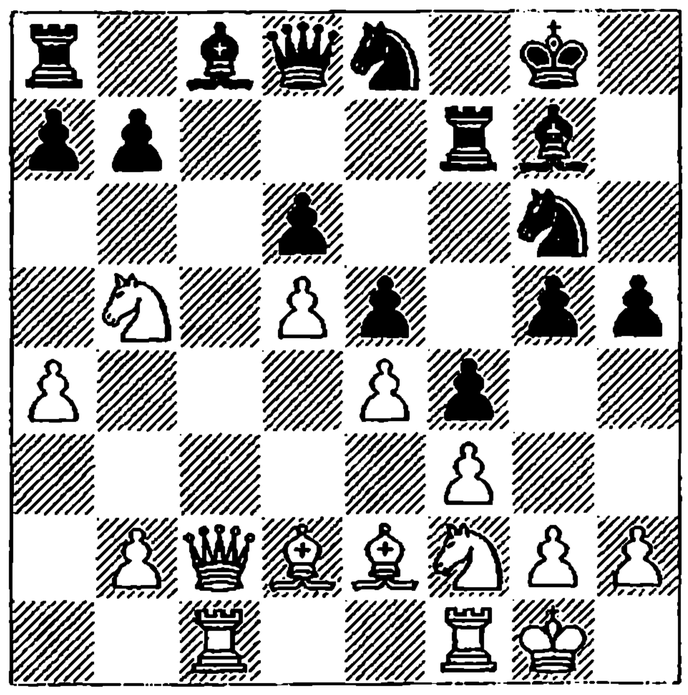
18...h5

18...♗f8 often transposes to the main lines. After 19 ♘f2 Black's choice is between 19...h5 and 19...♗d7 20 ♕b3 h5.

19 ♘f2! *(D)*

An important move: on f2 the knight prevents the ...g4 advance. (White could also play ♘f2 a bit earlier, with probable transposition to the main lines.)

B



We have reached one of the key positions of the 9 ♘e1 system. Black now should decide what to do about the threat to his a7-pawn.

19...a6?

A bad choice – Black weakens the b6-square prematurely, and will not get time to create sufficient counterplay on the kingside. The rare alternatives include 19...♗h6 and 19...♗f6, and the two main moves are:

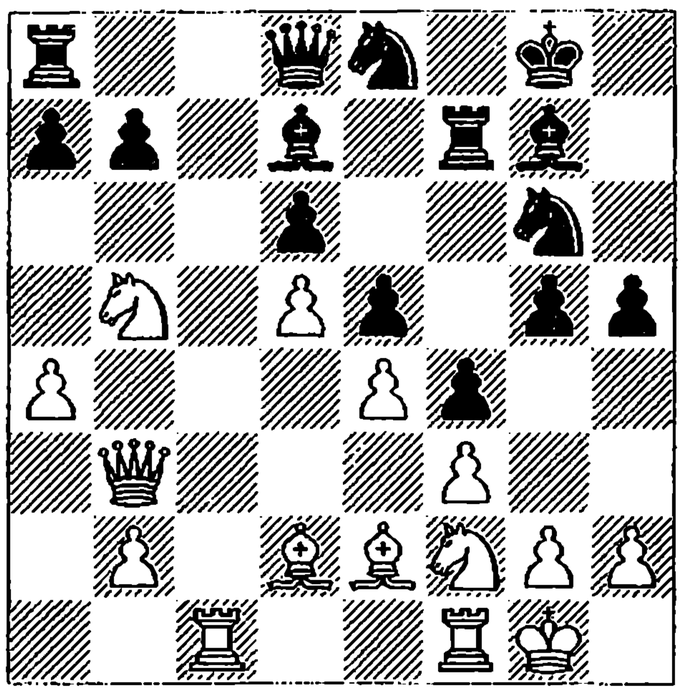
a) 19...♗f8 (ignoring the threat) 20 h3 (20 ♕b3 ♖g7 21 h3 ♘h4 22 ♖c2 a6 23 ♘a3 ♘f6 24 ♗e1 g4 25 hxg4 hxg4 26 ♘xg4 ♘h5! with sufficient compensation, Ftačnik-Zsu.Polgar, Trenčianske Teplice 1985; after 20 ♘xa7 Black is not obliged to sacrifice a pawn by 20...♗d7 21 ♘b5 ♖g7 22 h3 ♘h4 23 ♕b3 but can continue 20...♖c7! 21 ♗a5 ♖xc2 22 ♗xd8 ♖xe2 23 ♘xc8 with an acceptable endgame; for example, 23...♖xa4 24 ♘d3 g4 25 ♖f2 ♖e3 26 ♘e1 ♖a8 27 ♖fc2 ♖b3 28 ♔f2 ♖a2 29 ♖b1 ♔f7 30 ♔e2 ♗e7! = Novikov-Glek, Lvov 1985) 20...♖g7!? and again 21 ♘xa7 ♖c7 22 ♗a5 ♖xc2 23 ♗xd8 ♖xe2 24 ♘xc8 ♖xa4 25 ♘d3 g4 26 ♖f2 ♖e3 = is acceptable for Black, as in Averkin-Kasparov, USSR Spartakiad (Moscow) 1979.

b) 19...♗d7 (this puts ♘xa7 out of the question, but slows down Black's kingside play) 20 ♕b3 *(D)* and here:

b1) 20...♗f8 and then:

b11) 21 ♖c2 a6 22 ♘a3 ♖g7 and now White can play 23 a5!?. Instead, 23 h3!? ♘h4 transposes to Ivanchuk-Timman, Hilversum (4) 1991 which continued 24 ♖fc1 ♖b8 25 ♘c4 b6 26 a5 g4 27 fxg4 ♘f6 28 ♘xb6 hxg4 29 hxg4 ♘xg2!?

B



and now Ivanchuk should have taken the knight by 30 ♔xg2! ♘xg4 31 ♗xg4 ♗xg4 32 ♔f1!. Then Timman's suggestion "32...♗d7! with compensation" may not be wholly convincing.

b12) 21 ♖c4 a6 22 ♘a3 ♖g7 23 a5!? ♘f6 24 ♕b6 ♕e8 (24...♕xb6 25 axb6 seems to be unplayable for Black because White's b6-pawn is too dangerous) 25 h3 g4 26 fxg4 hxg4 27 hxg4 ♘h4 28 ♖c7 ♕g6 (Kožul-Radjabov, Sarajevo 2003) with a messy position where the banal 29 ♕xb7 (Shipov), trying to seize material and survive the attack, deserves serious attention.

b2) An interesting and important alternative, introduced by Dragutin Šahović, is 20...♗f6!? planning to fight White on the queenside by ...♕b8 and ...♗d8. For example, 21 ♖c2 (in a game between two experienced practitioners of the 9 ♘e1 variation, Neverov-Vokač, Bled OL 2002, White tried 21 ♗b4 ♗e7 22 ♖c2 but 22...a6! 23 ♘a3 g4! 24 fxg4 hxg4 25 ♗xg4 ♗xg4 26 ♘xg4 ♕b6+ followed by 27...a5 gave Black reasonable chances) 21...♕b8 22 ♘a3 ♗d8 23 a5 a6 24 ♘c4 (24 ♖fc1 b5!?) 24...♗b5 with double-edged play, Izeta-Šahović, Andorra 1984.

20 ♘a3! *(D)*

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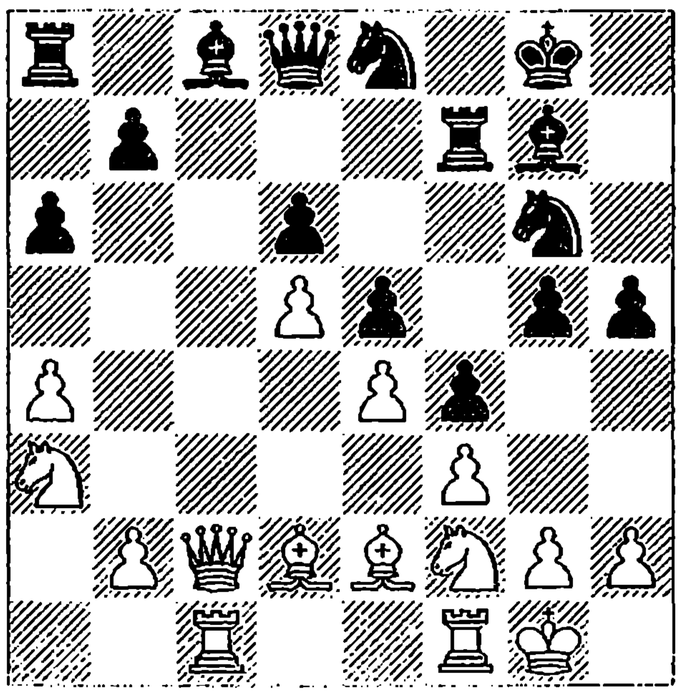


Suddenly White has achieved an ideal arrangement of forces. The line 20...♘f6 21 ♘c4 g4 22 ♗a5 followed by 23 ♘b6 is an illustration of what he wants. Black cannot defend against this threat without a further concession by ...b6, which would weaken the c6-square and create new targets for White's initiative.

20...♘h4

Seeking to attack.

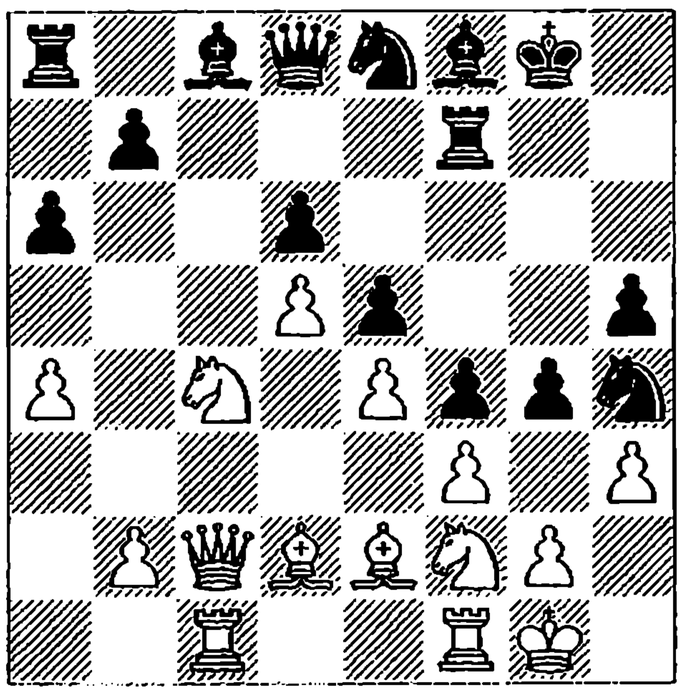
21 h3!?

The more direct 21 ♘c4 is probably even stronger: 21...g4?! 22 fxg4! (22 ♗a5?! ♕g5!) 22...b5? (22...hxg4 is better, but even that can hardly promise Black real compensation for the pawn) 23 ♗a5! ♕g5 24 ♘b6 with a decisive advantage, Ftačnik-Vokač, Czechoslovak Cht 1981.

21...♗f8 22 ♘c4 g4 *(D)*

After 22...b6, good enough for White is 23 ♕b3 or 23 a5!? b5 24 ♘b6, which does not win a piece (because Black has the ...♖c7 resource) but ensures the exchange of Black's light-squared bishop.

W



23 hxg4

23 ♗a5?! is worse in view of 23...♕g5! 24 hxg4 hxg4 and now 25 fxg4 f3! or 25 ♘xg4 ♗xg4 26 fxg4 ♘f6, when Black consolidates his forces. But 23 fxg4!? f3 (23...hxg4 24 ♗xg4!) 24 gxf3 ♘xf3+ 25 ♗xf3 ♖xf3 26 ♔g2! preserves White's advantage in simpler fashion than in the game.

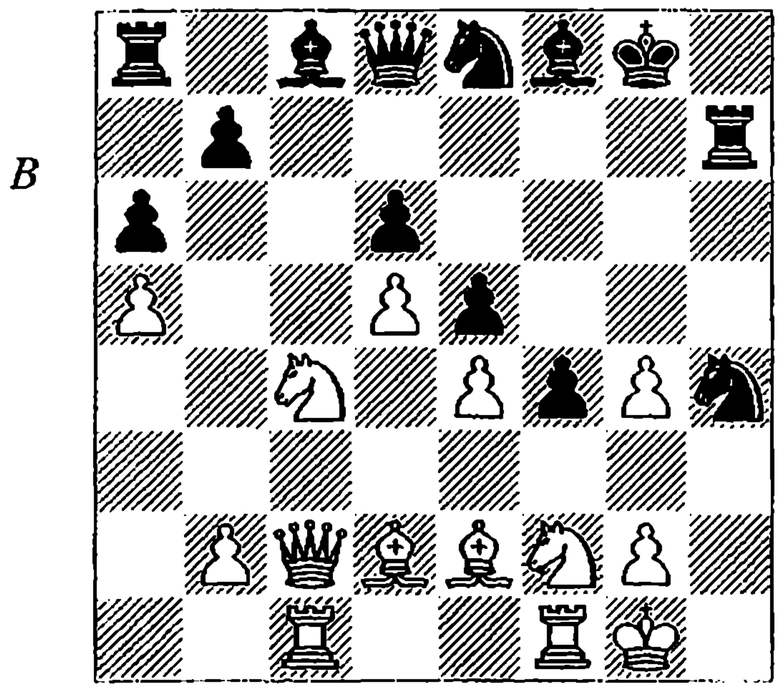
23...hxg4 24 fxg4 ♖h7

If 24...f3 25 ♗xf3 ♘xf3+ 26 gxf3 ♖xf3, there is again 27 ♔g2!. Therefore Black tries to create threats on the h-file.

25 a5 *(D)*

25 ♗a5!? ♕g5 26 ♘b6 is probably stronger, but ultra-sharp variations such as 26...f3

(26...♕h6 27 ♖fd1) 27 ♘xa8 fxg2 28 ♗d2!! (28 ♕xc8? ♕f4! and Black wins) 28...♘f3+ 29 ♔xg2! are hard to calculate.



25...♘xg2?

25...f3! 26 gxf3 ♘g6! offers Black some counterchances, and keeps him in the game. Instead, he blunders.

26 ♔xg2 ♕h4

After 26...♖h2+ White would not capture the rook, but play 27 ♔g1! with a colossal advantage.

27 ♖g1!

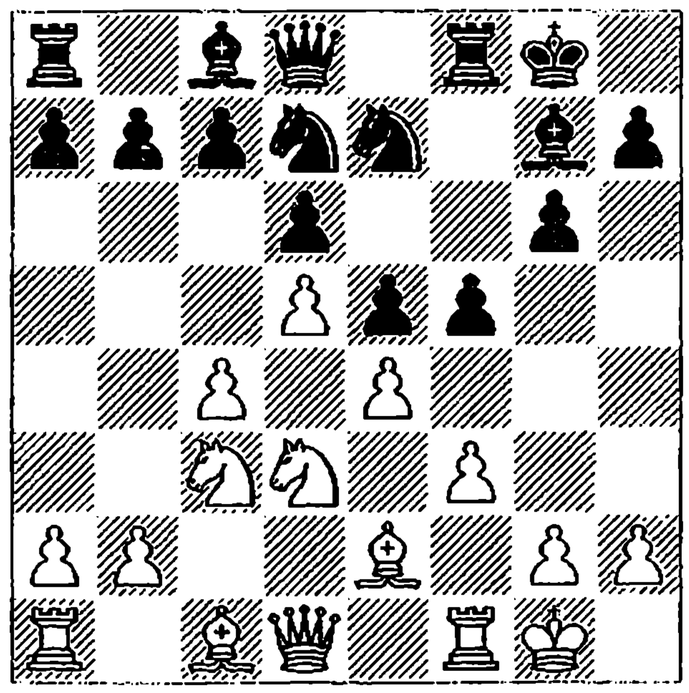
The winning move. 27 ♖h1?! is much less effective: 27...♕g3+ 28 ♔f1 ♖xh1+ 29 ♘xh1 ♕h3+.

27...f3+ 28 ♗xf3 ♕h2+ 29 ♔f1 ♖f7 30 ♖h1 ♕g3 31 ♖h3 ♕xh3+ 32 ♘xh3 ♖xf3+ 33 ♘f2 1-0

Game 2
Averkin – Golubev
Ukrainian Open Ch (Yalta) 1996

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 5 ♘f3 0-0 6 ♗e2 e5 7 0-0 ♘c6 8 d5 ♘e7 9 ♘e1 ♘d7 10 ♘d3 f5 11 f3 *(D)*

Quite a poisonous move-order. The game can transpose into lines with 11 ♗d2, but White's specific idea is linked to b4 (instead of ♗d2) and a quick advance of the queenside pawns. In modern grandmaster games, White employs this plan extremely rarely. As an exception, I can mention GM Igor Miladinović, who often plays in this way. It is surely no coincidence that Miladinović is a pupil of IM Orest Averkin, my opponent in the game under consideration.



11...f4

What I dislike for Black after 11...♔h8 is that White can play 12 ♗e3!, when 12...f4 13 ♗f2 g5 looks like a good version for White of the 10 ♗e3 line.

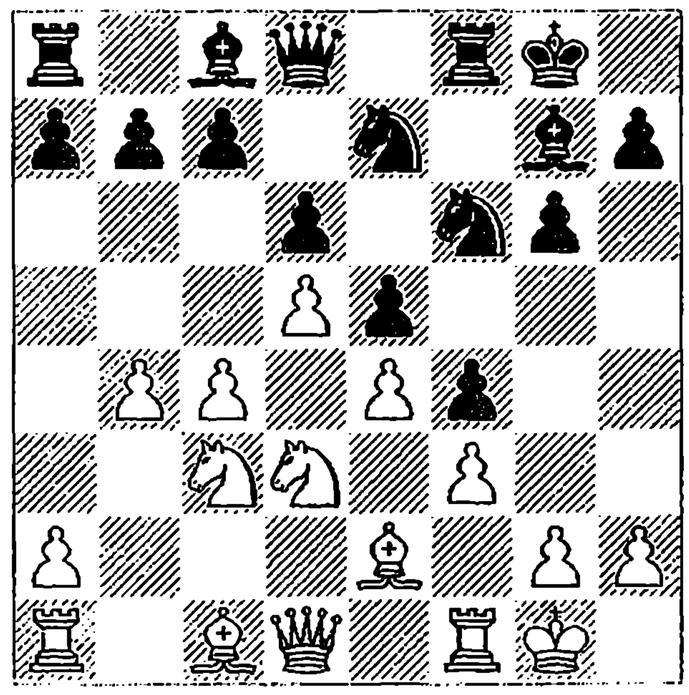
But 11...♘f6 can be considered as a decent alternative to the text. 12 c5!? (12 ♗d2 transposes to 11 ♗d2 ♘f6 12 f3; 12 g4!? transposes to 10 f3 f5 11 g4!? ♘f6 12 ♘d3; after 12 b4 Black has a good answer in 12...a5!?) 12...f4 (insufficient for equality is 12...c6 13 ♕b3 ♔h8 14 ♗e3!, Skembris-Gufeld, Athens 1985) and here White can try 13 b4!?, obtaining a position that will be considered below, in the note to White's 13th.

12 b4!?

12 g4 allows Black to take control over the h4-square by 12...♗f6!, Dreev-Gelfand, USSR jr Cht (Kramatorsk) 1989.

12...♘f6 *(D)*

Here 12...a5 does not look too convincing: 13 bxa5 ♖xa5 14 ♗d2 ♖a8 15 ♘b5! g5 16 ♗b4!? (threatening 17 c5) 16...b6 17 a4! ♘c5 18 a5 with pressure for White, Veltmander-Skotorenko, Rostov on Don 1954.



13 ♘f2!?

This is a useful move in several respects. The more direct 13 c5 is an important alternative: 13...g5 (Averkin mentioned 13...c6!? but 14 dxc6 ♘xc6 15 b5 ♘d4 16 ♘xf4! creates some problems for Black) 14 a4 ♖f7 with a (typically) complex and (surprisingly) almost unexplored position. Now:

a) After 15 a5 I would prefer 15...♗f8, but shall not abstain from providing the following example: 15...♘g6 16 ♘f2 h5 17 c6 ♗h6 18 ♗d2 ♖g7 19 cxb7 ♗xb7 20 ♖c1 ♗c8 21 h3 ♘h4 22 ♘b5 a6 23 ♘a3 ♕e8 24 b5 ♕g6 25 ♖c4 g4 26 fxg4 hxg4 27 hxg4 and now with the help of the combination 27...♘xg2! 28 ♔xg2 f3+! 29 ♗xf3 ♗xd2 Black secured an advantage in Polugaevsky-Borisenko, Gorky 1954, because 30 ♕xd2? loses quickly to 30...♘xg4.

b) 15 b5 ♗f8 and here:

b1) After 16 ♗a3, 16...♘g6 17 a5 h5 was played in Larsen-P.H.Nielsen, Copenhagen 1991, where the immediate and typical 18 b6!? axb6 19 axb6, destroying the queenside, could have been quite unpleasant for Black. Therefore 16...♖g7!? with the idea 17...g4 can be suggested. By the way, this could also be the reply to 16 a5.

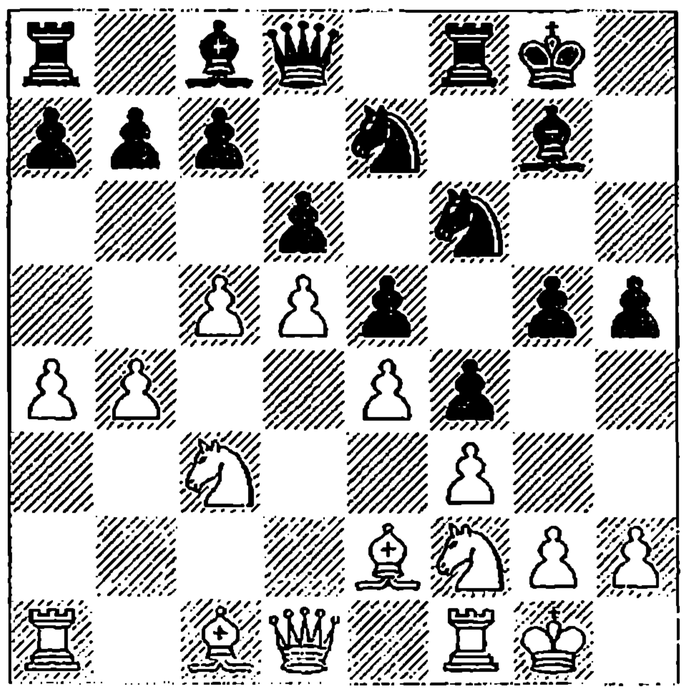
b2) 16 c6!? and now, instead of 16...b6?! 17 a5 ♖b8? (17...♖g7 18 axb6 cxb6 is necessary) 18 axb6 axb6 19 ♘f2 h5 20 ♕a4 +– followed by ♕a7 with inevitable material losses for Black, Veltmander-Levin, Leningrad 1954, Black could try 16...a5!? or 16...♖g7.

13...h5

13...g5 is possibly preferable. I was concerned about 14 g4 but it is not really dangerous: 14...h5 15 h3 ♔f7!? 16 c5 ♖h8, planning ...♖h6 and ...♕h8 with serious counterplay for Black.

14 c5 g5 15 a4 *(D)*

B



15...♔h8

Again, a bit too sophisticated. Even though there is no necessity to protect the c7-square, the more banal 15...♖f7!? 16 a5 (16 c6 bxc6 17 dxc6 ♗e6!) 16...♗f8 could have been preferred.

16 a5 ♖g8 17 g4!?

An interesting method: White agrees to accept some long-term weaknesses on the kingside, but at the same time stops Black's concrete play. The introductory 17 a6!? with the same idea deserved attention as well.

17...fxg3

Also after 17...hxg4 18 fxg4 it is hard for Black to regroup his pieces to prepare any serious attacking ideas.

18 hxg3 ♗h6 19 ♔g2! ♘g6 20 ♖h1 ♕e7

Connecting the rooks. Generally, ...♕e7 is one of my favourite moves in the King's Indian in situations where it is not clear what to do.

21 ♔f1

Unnecessary prophylaxis. 21 cxd6 cxd6 22 a6!? deserved attention, with at least a minimal advantage for White.

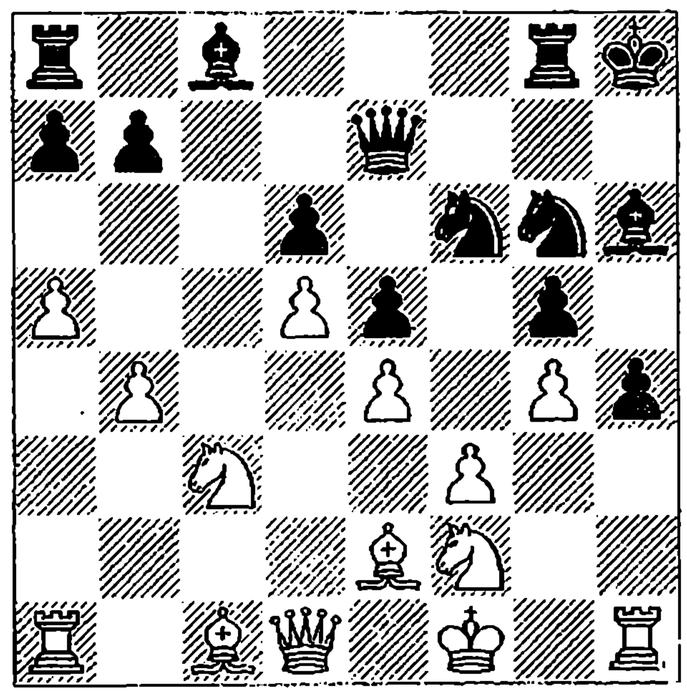
21...h4!?

Black can win the pawn by 21...dxc5!? 22 bxc5 ♕xc5 with the idea 23 ♘b5 ♕e7!, but his vulnerable c7- and e5-pawns grant White compensation.

22 cxd6 cxd6 23 g4 *(D)*

Preventing the activation of Black's knight by ...♘h5. In case of 23 gxh4 there would follow 23...♘xh4! (not 23...♘h5? 24 hxg5! ♘g3+ 25 ♔g2 ♘xh1 26 ♕xh1), when 24 ♖xh4 gxh4 25 ♗xh6 h3! gives Black counterplay.

B



After 23 g4, the pawn-structure is fixed. It may look profitable for Black as he has gained the f4-square for his knight and a protected passed pawn on h4. However, in exchange,

Black's dark-squared bishop has become a really bad piece and the emergence of one of White's knights on f5 now looks more probable. So the picture is hard to assess, once again.

23...♗d7 24 a6

Hardly the best moment for this advance. 24 ♗b5!? and 24 ♔g1 were among the possible alternatives.

24...bxa6

Black agrees to opening the queenside and hopes to develop some dynamic counterplay.

25 ♗xa6 ♖ab8 26 ♗a3 ♖gf8 27 ♔e1?

White's previous moves were not above criticism, but this is just clearly wrong: the king will not feel safe in the centre.

27...♕d8! 28 ♕d2 ♕b6 29 ♗f1 ♘e8 30 ♖h3 ♘c7 31 ♘fd1 ♘f4 32 ♖h2? ♘b5?

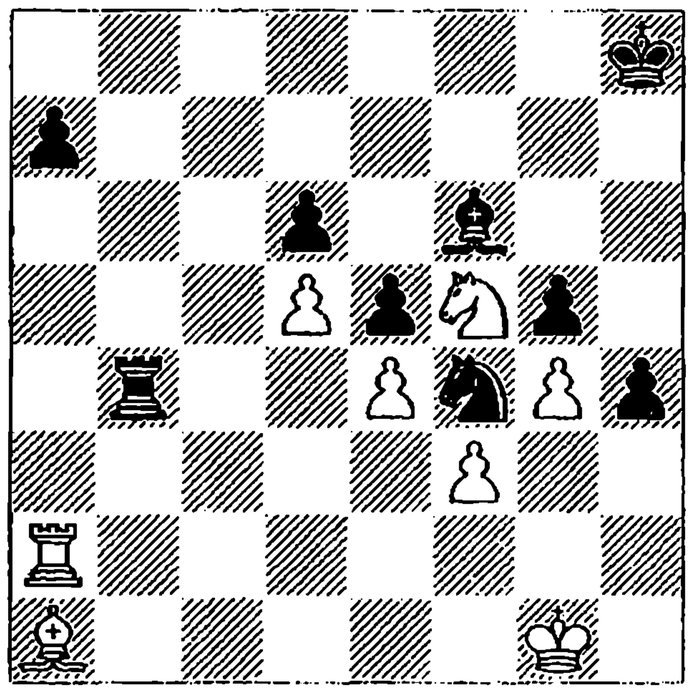
In mutual time-trouble both players missed 32...♕g1!, which has fatal consequences for White because he cannot defend against the various threats, first of all 33...♘d3+.

33 ♘xb5 ♗xb5 34 ♘e3

Now the knight reaches the desired square f5, and all Black's advantage disappears.

34...♗xf1 35 ♔xf1 ♗g7 36 ♘f5 ♗f6 37 ♕f2 ♕a6+ 38 ♔g1 ♖fc8 39 ♔h1 ♖c3 40 ♗b2! ♕xa1+ 41 ♗xa1 ♖c1+ 42 ♕g1 ♖xg1+ 43 ♔xg1 ♖xb4 44 ♖a2! *(D)*

B



44...♔g8?!

I was disappointed that 44...♗d8 45 ♘xd6 ♗b6+ 46 ♔h2 ♖b1? does not win, but in fact loses after 47 ♗xe5+ and ♗xf4. However, there was no reason to avoid 44...♖b3!? (or first 44...♖b1+) 45 ♘xd6 ♖xf3 with approximately equal chances.

45 ♘xd6! ♗e7 46 ♗xe5 ♖b1+ 47 ♔h2 ♘g6 48 ♘f5! ♘xe5 49 ♘xe7+ ♔f8 50 ♘c6! ♘xf3+ 51 ♔g2 ♘e1+ 52 ♔f2 h3 53 ♔g3?!

53 ♖xa7! is stronger; then it is hard to be sure that Black can escape in lines like 53...h2 54 ♖h7 ♘d3+ 55 ♔e3 h1♕ 56 ♖xh1 ♖xh1 57 ♔xd3 ♖g1.

53...♖b3+! 54 ♔h2 ♘f3+ 55 ♔xh3 ♘d2+ 56 ♔h2 ♘xe4 57 ♖xa7

White does not have any realistic winning chances, and a draw was agreed.

½-½

Game 3

D. Gurevich – Golubev

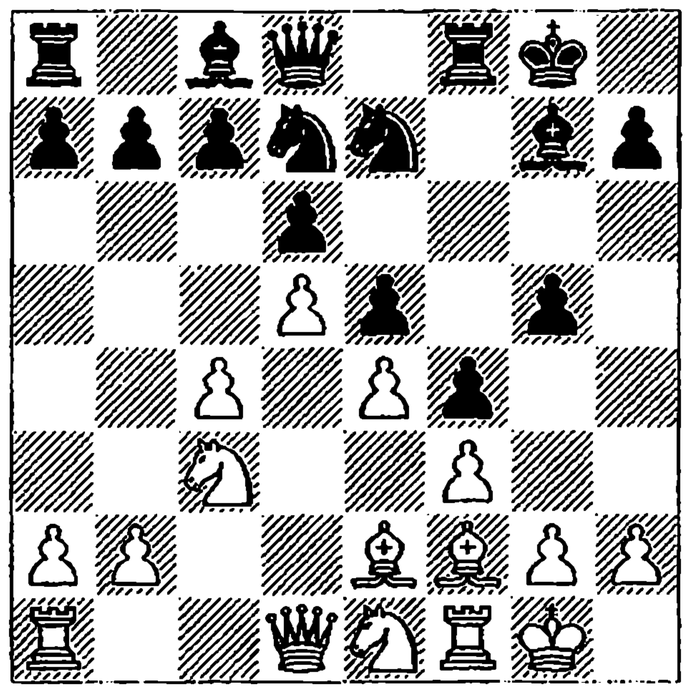
Biel open 1992

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 5 ♗e2 0-0 6 ♘f3 e5 7 0-0 ♘c6 8 d5 ♘e7 9 ♘e1 ♘d7 10 ♗e3

10 f3 f5 11 ♗e3 comes to the same thing.

10...f5 11 f3 f4 12 ♗f2 g5! *(D)*

W



We are at the initial crossroad of what is probably the sharpest and most chaotic subsystem of the entire King's Indian.

As usual, White's main plan involves the c5 advance, with the eventual aim of crushing Black on the queenside. After c5, the opening of the c-file by cxd6 is White's basic idea, while c6!? can sometimes be dangerous as well.

The dark-squared bishop on f2 is extremely helpful in the attack: not only c5 but also b6 and a7 are sensitive squares. But there is also one difference that is disadvantageous for White compared to lines where he plays ♘d3, f3 and ♘f2: the bishop on f2 does not help to fight against the ...g4 advance. Therefore Black usually manages to prepare ...g4 at some stage. White can try to use the bishop as a defender with a regrouping by ♔h1 and, after ...g3, ♗g1.

If Black's g3-pawn takes the white h2-pawn, then the black pawn itself may turn into a defender of the white king!

Black's most standard attacking plan begins with ...♘g6, ...♘f6, ...h5 (if there is no possibility to advance the g-pawn without this move!) and/or ...♖f7 (if the c7-square needs protection). At the moment, the knight is useful on d7 – from there it prevents White from advancing his c-pawn too easily. Once White has played ♘d3 or b4, then the mission of the knight on d7 is accomplished and it can be moved to f6 without any misgivings.

Besides the main plan, Black has at his disposal another, more radical, idea: 13...♖f6!?, preparing an attack by ...♖h6 and ...♕e8-h5 or by ...♖g6, supporting ...g4.

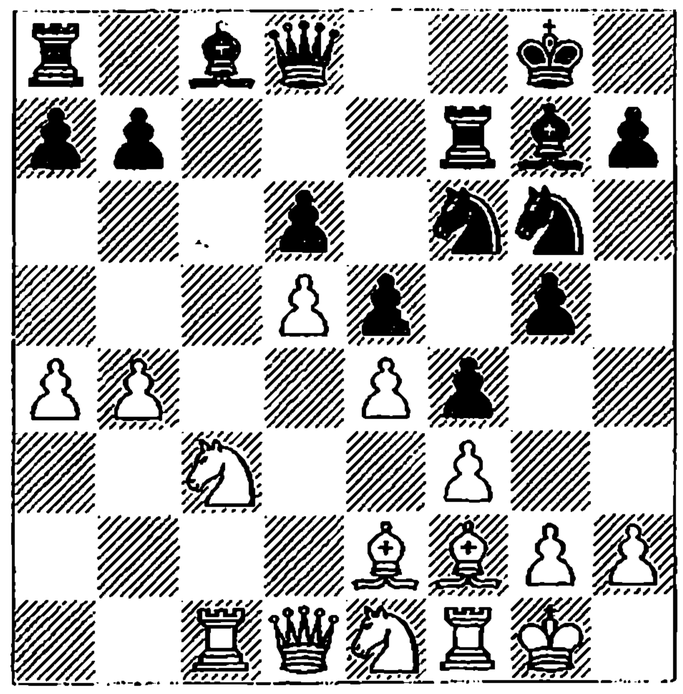
13 ♘b5

An interesting attempt to disturb Black's queenside immediately. The move has been used several times by grandmasters, including Korchnoi – who has also tried almost all the other reasonable moves in this position. White's choice is really wide.

The strategic problem with the two most obvious moves (13 ♘d3 and 13 b4) is that, while these moves ensure the c5 advance, they turn out to be not so useful after this move has been played. Here are some practical examples, including in lines 'a' and 'b' some that especially discouraged White:

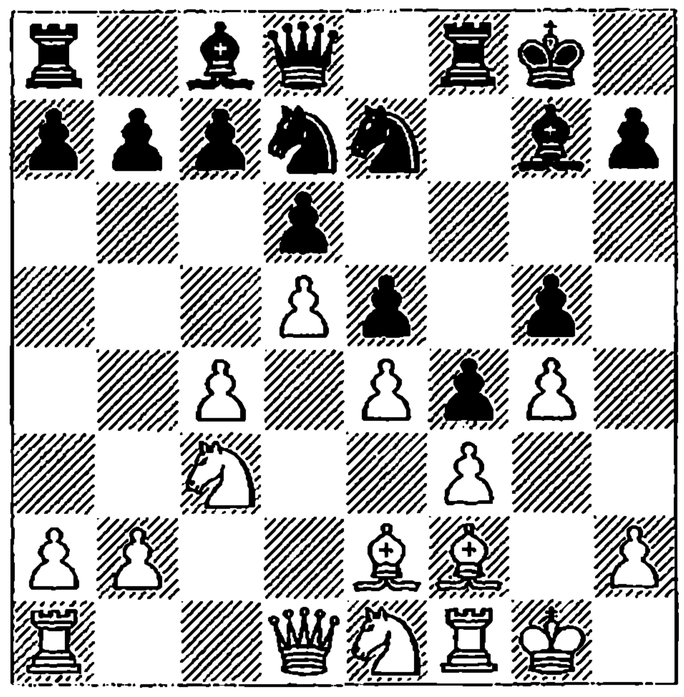
a) 13 ♘d3 ♘f6 14 c5 ♘g6 15 a4!? (15 ♖c1 ♖f7! 16 cxd6 cxd6 17 ♘b5 g4! has been known to be good for Black since Najdorf-Trifunović, Mar del Plata 1953) 15...h5 16 h3!? (16 cxd6 cxd6 17 a5 g4 18 ♘b5 g3!, Larsen-Torre, Bauang 1973) 16...♖f7 17 c6 (17 a5!?) 17...a5 (Kasparov awarded this move two exclamation marks) 18 cxb7 ♗xb7 19 b4 ♗c8! 20 bxa5 ♗h6! and Black is ready to attack by ...g4 followed by ...♗g5, Korchnoi-Kasparov, Amsterdam (Euwe mem) 1991.

b) 13 b4 ♘f6 14 c5 ♘g6 15 cxd6 cxd6 16 ♖c1 ♖f7 17 a4 *(D)*.


B

17...♗f8! (considered best after Kasparov's famous victory over Piket; prior to this game the main discussion revolved around 17...h5 18 a5 and now 18...g4 19 ♘b5 g3 20 ♗xa7 or 18...♗d7 19 ♘b5 ♗xb5 20 ♗xb5 g4) 18 a5 ♗d7 19 ♘b5 (wrong or, at best, very risky, because now Black gets the possibility to attack without ...h5; better is 19 ♔h1 with chances for both sides) 19...g4! 20 ♘c7 (20 fxg4 ♘xe4) 20...g3! 21 ♘xa8?! (after 21 hxg3 fxg3 22 ♗xg3 Black has a promising choice between 22...♗h6!? 23 ♘xa8 ♘h5 24 ♗f2 ♘gf4 or 22...♘h5) 21...♘h5! 22 ♔h1 (after 22 ♗xa7 ♕h4 23 h3 ♗xh3 24 gxh3 ♕xh3 25 ♖f2 gxf2+ 26 ♔xf2 it is surprisingly difficult for Black to conclude the attack against White's almost unprotected king, but 26...♘h4!? 27 ♘c2 ♕g3+ 28 ♔f1 ♘g2! seems to be decisive) 22...gxf2 (with a big advantage) 23 ♖xf2 ♘g3+ 24 ♔g1 ♕xa8 25 ♗c4 a6! 26 ♕d3 ♕a7 27 b5? axb5 28 ♗xb5 ♘h1! 0-1 Piket-Kasparov, Tilburg 1989.

c) 13 g4!? *(D)* represents a totally different, and more positional, approach.


B

White restricts Black's kingside ambitions, but also leaves himself little chance to undertake a quick and effective attack on the queenside. Now:

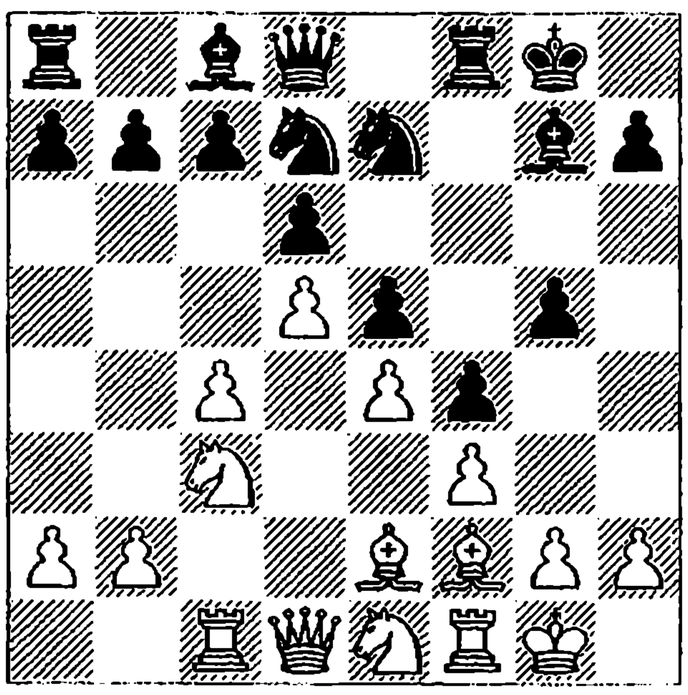
c1) 13...h5 14 h3 and then after 14...♔f7 15 ♘d3 ♖h8 16 ♔g2 ♘f6 17 c5 ♘g6 Black is a tempo down in comparison with the line 10 ♘d3 f5 11 ♗d2 ♘f6 12 f3 f4 13 g4 g5 because there the white bishop reaches f2 not in two moves but in three (♗c1-d2-e1-f2). The game

Korchnoi-Nunn, Monaco rpd 1994 continued 18 ♖h1 ♘h4+ 19 ♗xh4 gxh4 20 ♕b3 ♘h7 21 ♖ac1 a6 22 ♘a4 ♗f8 23 cxd6 ♗xd6 24 ♘ac5 hxg4 25 hxg4 ♘g5 26 ♘xb7 h3+ 27 ♔h2 ♗xb7 28 ♕xb7 and Black probably did not have full compensation for the pawn.

c2) 13...fxg3 14 hxg3 ♘g6 (14...a5!? deserves some attention, planning ...♘c5 and keeping the other knight on e7 for the time being) 15 ♘g2 (15 ♘c2!?) 15...a5 (15...♘f6 16 ♘e3, preparing ♘f5; the sacrifice 15...♘f4!? 16 gxf4 exf4 looks a bit over-optimistic and has not so far been tried) 16 ♘e3 ♘c5 17 ♕c2 (17 b3?! allows 17...♘f4!, as in Stanec-Timoshenko, Vienna 1998, but 17 ♘a4!? is possible) 17...h5 18 ♘f5 h4 19 g4 ♘f4. This type of very closed position is probably the most White can hope to achieve in the 13 g4 line. Possibly he is slightly better, but Black's prospects are reasonable in the long struggle that lies ahead.

d) 13 ♖c1!? *(D)*, preparing to sacrifice a pawn by c5, is an important and topical idea for White. Black has mainly tried two options:

B



d1) The brutal and eccentric 13...♖f6!? has gained popularity in recent years and, as matter of fact, has become Black's main choice at grandmaster level. Nevertheless, this type of position with an early ...♖f6 has not been sufficiently researched. Black's set-up obviously lacks harmony, but his mating threats are a serious matter. While it is not very difficult for White to defend against checkmate, he is liable to lose some of his harmony in the process.

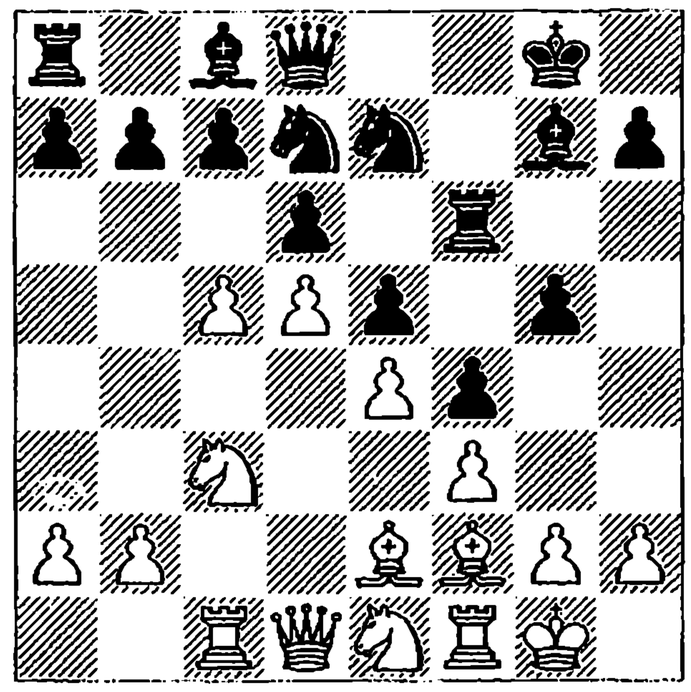
d11) After 14 b4 ♖h6 15 c5 Black often plays 15...a6, which, on the whole, is an important part of his plan, but he can also play the immediate 15...♕e8 16 ♔h1 ♘f6!? because the straightforward 17 cxd6 cxd6 18 ♘b5?! lets Black attack by 18...♕h5 19 ♗g1 ♕h4! with the threat of 20...♘h5 and 21...♘g3#.

d12) If after 14 ♘d3 ♖h6 White plays 15 c5, then 15...♕e8!, with the basic idea 16 cxd6 ♕h5! 17 h3? ♘f6 18 dxe7 ♗xh3, is even more advisable. It is safer for White to begin with 15 b4! and after 15...♕e8 he can defend his h-pawn not only by 16 ♔h1 with the idea 17 ♗g1, but also by 16 ♗e1 intending 17 h3 and 18 ♘f2.

d13) 14 g4!?, which was once tried by Piket, deserves attention.

d14) 14 c5!? *(D)* and now:

B



d141) 14...dxc5?! 15 ♘d3 b6 16 b4 looks very good for White.

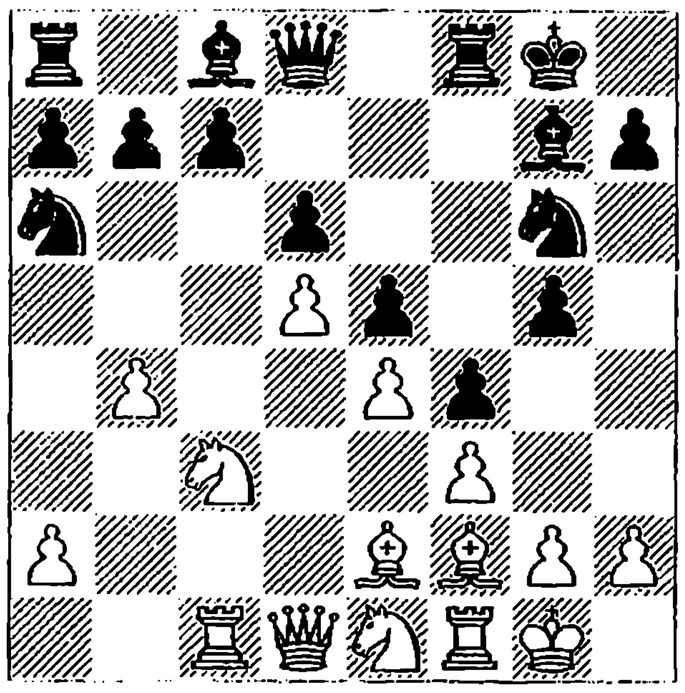
d142) 14...a6 is to some extent playable, but gives White many interesting options. For example, 15 ♘d3 ♖h6 16 cxd6 cxd6 and now 17 ♕b3!? ♕e8 18 ♖fd1 ♕h5 19 h3 ♘f6 20 ♔f1!, as in Hönsch-M.Böhm, Germany tt 1986/7, 15 ♘a4!? or 15 c6!? bxc6 16 dxc6 ♘f8 17 ♘d3. In the last case, Black probably should play 17...♖h6, transposing to the game Rogovski-Radjabov, Alushta 2001, where he preserved some counterchances after 18 ♘b4 ♕e8 19 ♔h1 ♘e6 20 ♘cd5 ♘xd5 21 ♘xd5 ♔h8.

d143) 14...♘xc5 15 b4 ♘a6 16 ♘d3 ♖h6 17 a4 ♕e8 18 ♔h1!. Now in Vera-Nataf, Montreal open 2003 Black, deviating from a previous encounter between the same players, chose 18...♗d7 (18...♕h5 19 ♗g1 ♗d7 20 ♘a2! ♖c8 21 ♘f2 ♕e8 22 ♘g4 ♖g6 23 b5 with an advantage for White, Vera-Nataf, Havana (Capablanca mem) 2002) and here, instead of 19 ♕b3 (19 b5?! ♕h5 20 ♗g1 ♘c5!) 19...♔h8 20 ♘b2? ♕h5 21 ♗g1 g4 with good play for Black, 19 ♗g1 (Notkin) looks critical, where White is already threatening to play 20 b5, and 19...♕h5 just transposes to 18...♕h5 19 ♗g1 ♗d7.

d2) Note that Black may begin with 13...a6, preparing ...♖f6. This move-order prevents the immediate 14 c5 (as White does not have the ♘b5 resource any more) but has its drawbacks too – thus, 14 g4!? looks like a good idea for White.

d3) 13...♘g6 (with all due respect to ...♖f6 ideas, I still feel that the standard approach is the most appropriate here) 14 c5!? (otherwise White has to transpose to the lines with 13 ♘d3 or 13 b4) 14...♘xc5 (14...dxc5? 15 b4! with the idea 15...cxb4 16 ♘b5) 15 b4 ♘a6 *(D)* (15...♘d7? fails to 16 ♘b5, so Black's knight is forced to occupy this awkward position).

W



Now White has two important possibilities:

d31) 16 ♘b5 ♗d7 17 ♘xa7 (17 a4 h5 comes to the same thing after 18 ♘xa7, while 18 ♘d3 transposes to 16 ♘d3 h5 17 ♘b5 ♗d7 18 a4) 17...h5 (17...♘xb4?! 18 ♕b3! favours White) 18 a4 (after 18 a3 Black should, according to Korchnoi, play 18...♖f7 with the point that after 19 ♘b5? g4 White cannot win the pawn on g4 because he would lose the unprotected knight on b5; if instead 19 ♕c2, then 19...g4 20 ♗xa6 bxa6 21 ♕xc7 ♕f8!? gives Black compensation) 18...♖f7 (in my view, 18...♘xb4 19 ♕b3 g4! is possibly an important improvement) 19 ♘b5 ♗h6 and now 20 ♖c4!? (removing the rook from possible attack by 20...g4 21 fxg4 f3) 20...♖g7 21 ♔h1 ♘f8 (preparing ...g4) 22 g3! is a plan for White developed by Yermolinsky and Atalik. Several of their games continued 22...fxg3 23 ♗xg3 ♘g6 24 ♘d3 ♘f4 25 ♗xf4 gxf4 26 ♖g1 and White is somewhat better.

d32) 16 ♘d3 h5 17 ♘b5 ♗d7 18 a4 ♗h6!? 19 ♖c3 and here:

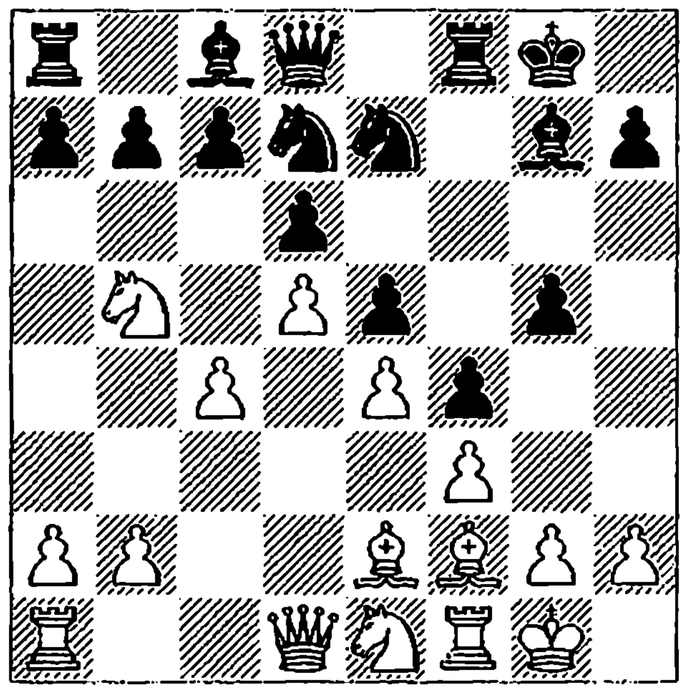
d321) 19...♖f7 20 ♘xa7 ♖g7 and now, instead of 21 ♘b5 ♘f8, as in Korchnoi-Cvitan, Pula Echt 1997, in the game Bern-Lecroq, corr. Wch 2002 White continued 21 b5! ♘c5 22 ♘xc5 dxc5 23 ♗xc5, offering a piece sacrifice: 23...b6 24 ♘c6 ♗xc6 25 dxc6 ♕xd1 26 ♗c4+ ♔h7 27 ♖xd1 bxc5 28 ♖a3 and White's extra queenside pawn is worth more than Black's extra piece. Lecroq declined the offer, but 23...g4 24 fxg4 ♕g5 25 b6 cxb6 26 ♗xb6 hxg4 27 ♗b5 f3 28 ♗xd7 ♖xd7 29 g3 did not work well for him either, and White gradually converted his advantage into victory.

d322) 19...b6!? 20 ♗e1! ♖f7 21 ♘f2 ♘h4 (21...♗c8!?, as suggested by Piket, is also possible, with complex play) 22 ♘xd6 cxd6 23 ♗xa6 ♕e8 24 ♕e2 (24 b5 ♕d8) 24...g4! 25 fxg4 (Piket-Kasparov, Linares 1997) and, according to Piket, Black should play 25...♘xg2! 26 ♔xg2 hxg4 with compensation for the knight.

e) 13 a4!?, which is far and away White's most popular move, will be considered in the next two games.

Now we return to 13 ♘b5 *(D)*.

B



13...♘f6!?

This pawn sacrifice was first used by John Nunn.

13...a6? is what White is hoping for. He replies 14 ♘a7! and if Black wishes to avoid a highly unprofitable exchange of his light-squared bishop, he must continue 14...♖xa7 15 ♗xa7, but he cannot trap the bishop in any satisfactory way and otherwise does not have sufficient compensation for the exchange. 15...b6 is answered by 16 b4! ♗b7 17 c5 dxc5 18 ♖c1, etc. (Korchnoi-Hulak, Zagreb IZ 1987).

On the other hand, the modest 13...b6!? has given Black very decent results in practice.

D.Gurevich-Schekachev, Moscow (Tal mem) 1992 continued 14 b4 a6 15 ♘c3 ♘f6!? 16 c5 ♖b8 17 cxb6 cxb6 18 b5 a5 19 ♖c1 ♗d7 20 ♘a4 g4! with good counterplay.

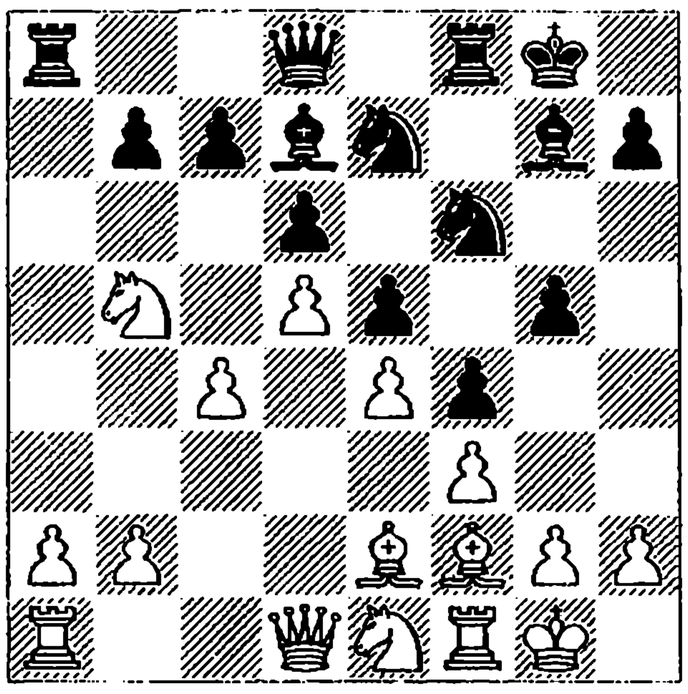
14 ♘xa7

14 c5 is a little-explored move: 14...g4!? (or 14...a6 15 cxd6 cxd6 16 ♘c3 ♘g6!?) 15 cxd6 cxd6 and after 16 ♖c1 (16 ♘xa7? g3 is bad for White) Black can continue 16...g3 17 hxg3 ♘h5! 18 gxf4, when both 18...exf4 and 18...♘xf4 give him interesting attacking possibilities.

14...♗d7 15 ♘b5 *(D)*

Benjamin-Nunn, Hastings 1987/8 and a few other games continued 15 c5 ♖xa7 16 cxd6 ♘c8 17 dxc7 ♕xc7 18 ♗xa7 ♘xa7 19 ♕b3 ♕c5+ with decent prospects for Black.

B



15...♘g6

The more obvious 15...g4 can be answered by 16 fxg4 ♘xe4 17 ♗h4! with a complicated, unbalanced position.

16 ♕c2

Protecting e4. If 16 c5, then 16...g4! is not only necessary, but also quite strong.

16...h5

I was not sure whether Black has sufficient compensation after 16...g4 17 fxg4!.

17 c5 g4 18 c6

The natural 18 cxd6 can be answered by 18...♗xb5 19 ♗xb5 g3!? 20 hxg3 fxg3 21 ♗xg3 cxd6, when Black, who is two pawns down, has reasonable chances thanks to his control over the dark squares. At the moment he is threatening 22...♕b6+, but the main idea is 22...h4 followed by ...♘h5 or ...♗h6.

18...bxc6 19 dxc6 ♗c8

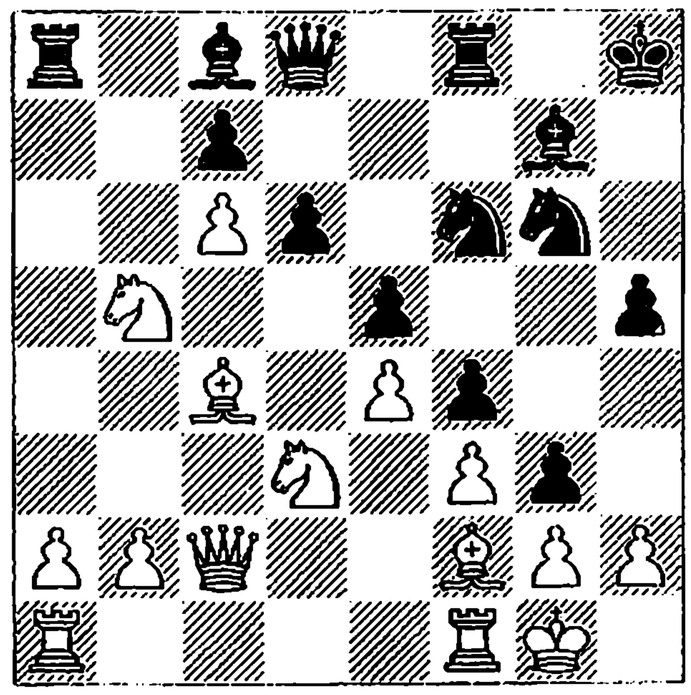
Avoiding the exchange of the light-squared bishops (19...♗e6 20 ♗c4).

20 ♗c4+ ♔h8 21 ♘d3

Planning a possible ♘b4-d5.

21...g3!? *(D)*

W



Again, Black is ready to sacrifice a second pawn.

22 ♗e1

Not an obvious decision. 22 hxg3 fxg3 23 ♗xg3 would, naturally, be answered by 23...h4 followed by ...♘h5 with the initiative on the kingside. White decided to avoid this type of position at any price, but now events take an even more dangerous turn for him.

22...d5!?

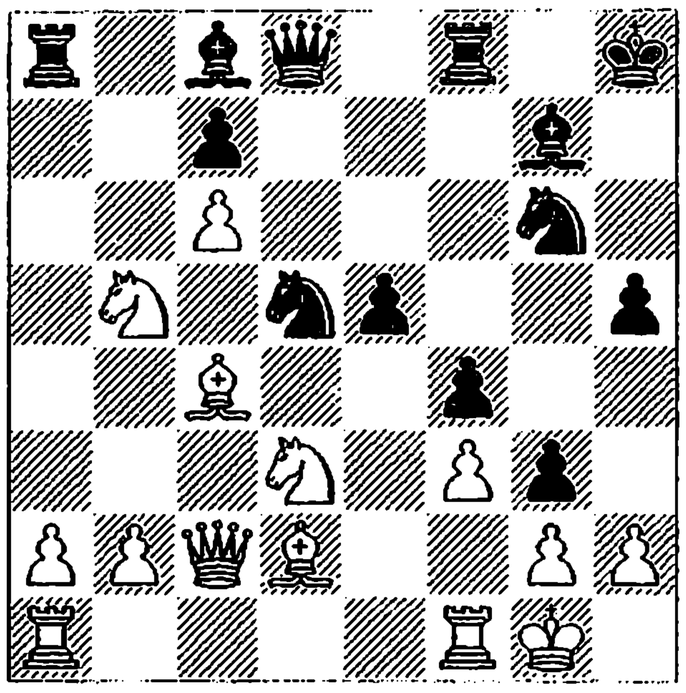
Black opens the centre, trying to exploit the lack of coordination among White's forces. After the game I was rather happy with my move, but there were ways to continue the attack by more standard means; e.g., 22...h4 and if 23 h3 (preventing ...h3), then 23...♘h7 followed by 24...♘g5 and a sacrifice on h3. It is very hard to judge which is objectively best.

23 exd5

23 ♖d1!? deserved attention; e.g., 23...dxc4 24 ♘xf4 gxh2+ 25 ♔xh2 ♘xf4 26 ♖xd8 ♖xd8 with a messy position where White has queen and two pawns for rook, bishop and knight.

23...♘xd5 24 ♗d2? *(D)*

White forgets about his kingside. The natural 24 ♗xd5!? ♕xd5 25 ♘xc7 is probably best. Black planned to continue with 25...♕d4+ 26 ♔h1 ♗f5! (as I now see, 26...♕d8 27 ♘xa8 ♕h4 28 h3 ♗xh3 29 gxh3 ♕xh3+ 30 ♔g1 ♘h4 is also interesting but it gives Black no more than a draw after 31 ♘xe5! ♗xe5 32 ♗c3 ♗xc3 33 ♕xc3+ ♔g8 34 ♕d2 g2 35 ♕d5+ ♖f7) but 27 ♗c3! leads to positions that are not so easy to evaluate; e.g., 27...♕d8 28 ♘xa8 ♗xd3 29 ♕d2 ♕h4 30 h3 ♗xf1 (30...♗f5!?) 31 ♖xf1 ♖xa8.



B

24...♕h4!

Now the attack is decisive.

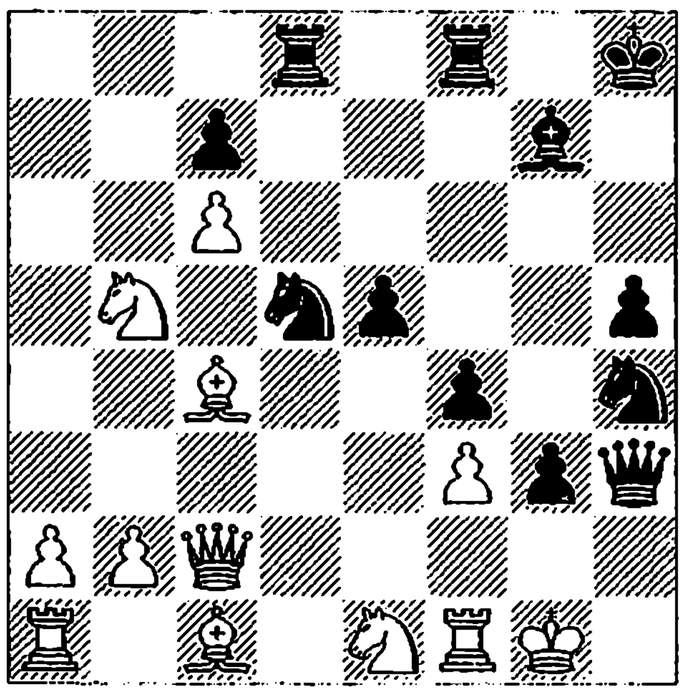
25 h3 ♗xh3 26 gxh3 ♕xh3 27 ♗c1

On other bishop moves, 27...♘e3 wins on the spot.

27...♘h4! 28 ♘e1

Another forced retreat. 28 ♗xd5?! g2 is totally lost for White. For example, 29 ♕e2 e4 30 ♗xe4 ♖g8 31 ♔f2 ♕g3+ 32 ♔g1 ♗d4+ 33 ♘xd4 gxf1♕+ 34 ♔xf1 ♕g1#.

28...♖ad8! *(D)*



W

29 a4

If 29 ♗xd5 ♖xd5 30 ♘xc7, then simplest is 30...e4!? 31 ♘xd5 ♗d4+ 32 ♗e3 fxe3 33 ♕e2 ♘g2 and Black mates. Or 29 ♕e2 ♘e3!? 30 ♗xe3 fxe3 31 f4 ♖f5 32 ♗e6 ♖d2 33 ♕xh5+ ♖xh5 34 ♗xh3 e2 and Black has a decisive advantage.

29...♘e3 30 ♗xe3 fxe3 31 ♗e6

Otherwise 31...♖d2.

31...♕xe6 32 ♖d1 ♖xd1 33 ♕xd1 ♕h3 34 ♕e2 ♖d8 35 f4 ♖d2 36 ♕xh5+ ♔g8 37 ♕xh4

If 37 ♕e8+, then 37...♗f8.

37...♕xh4

In time-trouble White played...

38 ♘f3

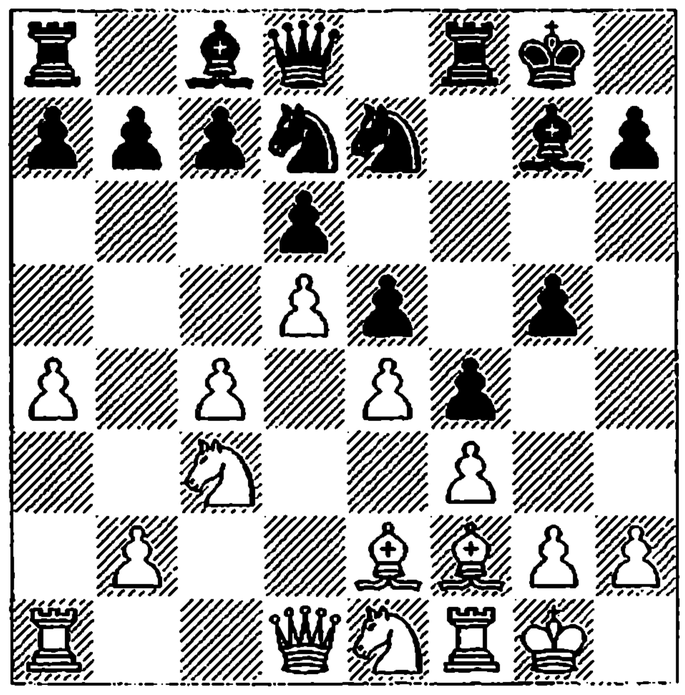
...but then resigned, not waiting for Black's answer.

0-1

Biel 1992 was a memorable tournament for me. I played a number of successful and creative games, including a nice win against IM Renzo Mantovani in the round which preceded the game versus Dmitry Gurevich. I still consider that game in the Sozin Attack to be one of my very best games. But it was not me but Gurevich who got the award for the best game of that round, because he also managed to checkmate his opponent beautifully. So, in our encounter I gained a kind of 'revenge'. In turn, Gurevich's 'revenge' took place in the Geneva 1993 tournament, where he tortured me in the Petrosian System (7 d5). This game, where I was lucky to escape with a draw in the end, can be found later in this book (Game 19).

Game 4
Krivoshei – Golubev
Ukrainian Cht (Alushta) 1995

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 5 ♘f3 0-0 6 ♗e2 e5 7 0-0 ♘c6 8 d5 ♘e7 9 ♘e1 ♘d7 10 ♗e3 f5 11 f3 f4 12 ♗f2 g5 13 a4 *(D)*



B

The advance of the a-pawn is useful in most of White's possible queenside plans, both those with the traditional c5 or with an early ♘b5. At the same time, it gives Black an obvious possibility to change the strategic picture by playing 13...a5 (followed by 14...b6). It stops c5 and forces White to pursue his queenside initiative by preparing b4. When the theory of this line started to develop, 13...a5 was assessed as dubious for Black. Kasparov expressed scepticism

about this move in the annotations to one of his games, and opted for 13...♘g6 against Korchnoi in 1991. However, the assessment gradually changed and, while things are by no means clear-cut, 13...a5 can now be viewed as Black's main move. The consequences of 13...a5 will be examined in the next game, and here I shall briefly overview Black's other possibilities.

13...♘g6

This is the most studied move. Others:

a) 13...♘f6?! allows c5 and cannot be recommended. 14 c5 ♘g6 15 a5! h5 16 cxd6 cxd6 17 ♘b5! g4 18 ♘xa7 g3 19 ♗b6 gxh2+ 20 ♔xh2 (or 20 ♔h1 ♕e7 21 ♘xc8 ♖axc8 22 ♘d3 h4 23 ♘f2!) 20...♕e7 21 ♘xc8 ♖axc8 22 ♖h1!, Kiriakov-Ulko, Moscow (Geller mem) 1999. White has achieved all his goals: he has won a pawn on the queenside, exchanged Black's light-squared bishop and defended his king.

b) After 13...♖f6, one of the main specialists of 13 a4 for White, GM Petr Kiriakov, invariably responds with 14 a5 (14 ♘b5!? should probably be met by 14...a5) 14...a6 (it is hard for Black to do without ...a6; e.g., 14...♖h6 15 ♘d3 ♘f6 16 ♗e1! ♕e8 17 ♘f2 ♖g6?! 18 c5!, Kiriakov-Smirnov, Russian Cht (Novokuznetsk) 1999) and now White parries his opponent's attack by the typical manoeuvre 15 ♘d3 ♖h6 16 ♗e1! (not 16 c5?! ♕e8 17 cxd6 ♕h5) 16...♕e8 17 ♘f2 with somewhat the better chances.

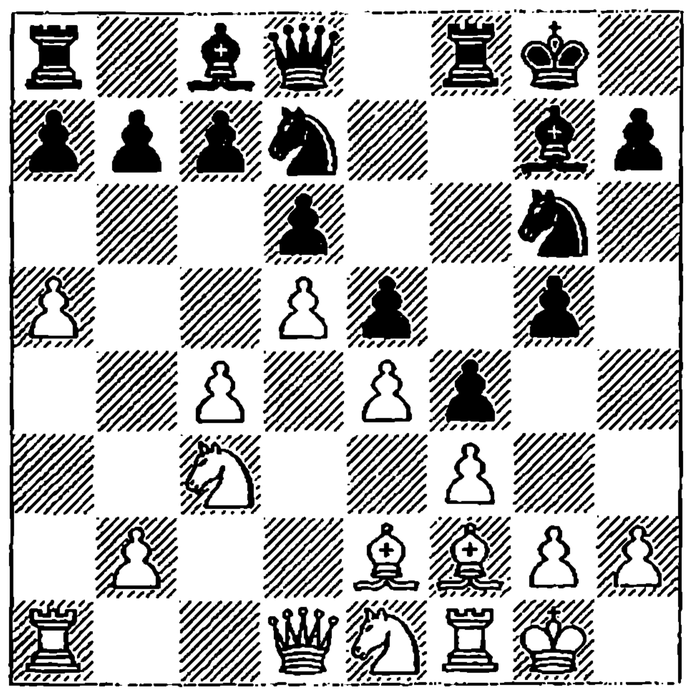
c) If Black begins with 13...a6, then White gets time to apply the same scheme with the inclusion of c5 and cxd6 by 14 ♘d3!? ♖f6 15 c5 ♖h6 16 cxd6 (the alternative is 16 ♕b3 ♔h8) 16...cxd6 17 a5 ♕e8 18 ♗e1! (as in P.H.Nielsen-Volokitin, Ohrid Ech 2001) with the idea 18...♘f6 19 ♘f2!.

d) 13...h5 has little independent significance and only gives White the additional possibility of 14 ♘b5!?. After 14 a5 play usually transposes to other lines. I can mention 14...a6?! 15 ♘d3 ♘f6 16 c5 g4 17 cxd6 cxd6 and now one interesting possibility is 18 fxg4!? ♘xg4 (or 18...hxg4 19 ♗h4!) 19 ♘a4 ♘xf2 20 ♖xf2 ♕xa5 21 ♗xh5 ♕d8 22 ♘c3 ♖f6 23 g4!, Korchnoi-Forster, Swiss Cht 1994, but 18 ♘a4 is also good for White; then Black probably should transpose to Korchnoi-Gelfand (see the note to White's 15th move below) by 18...♘g6, because 18...g3 19 hxg3 fxg3 20 ♗xg3 ♘g6 is parried by 21 ♘b6 ♖b8 22 ♕e1!, disallowing ...h4.

14 a5! *(D)*

The problem with 14 ♘b5 is not 14...a6? 15 ♘a7, but 14...♘f6! 15 ♘xa7 g4 16 ♘xc8 and now Black has 16...g3 17 hxg3 ♘h5! with an attack.

B



14...a6?!

Or:

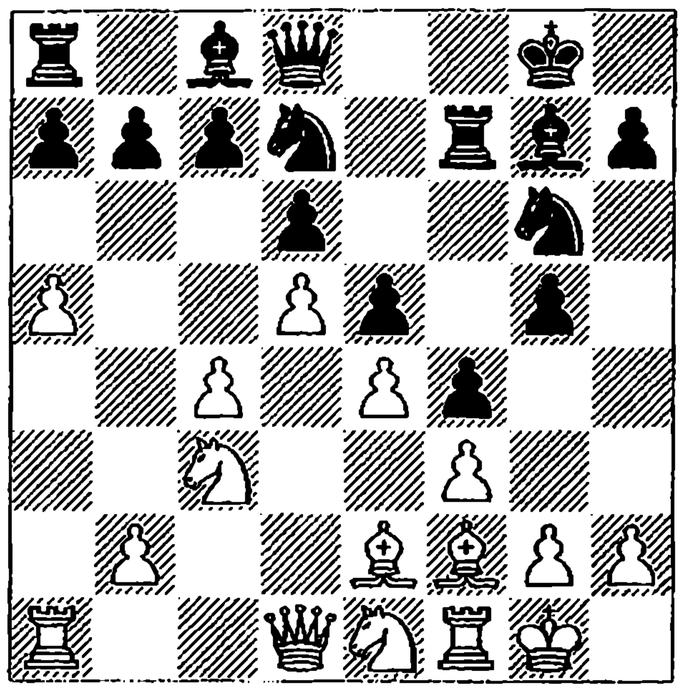
a) In contrast with the previous note, after 14...h5, 15 ♘b5! works better for White because the h5-square is now occupied by a pawn and Black does not have the ...♘h5! resource any more. 15...♘f6 16 ♘xa7 ♗d7 (after 16...g4 17 ♘xc8 g3 18 hxg3 fxg3 19 ♗xg3 h4 20 ♗h2 ♘f4 21 ♗xf4 exf4 the energetic 22 e5!, first played by Kiriakov, gives White the advantage) and now 17 c5! has proved extremely successful for White in practice (instead, 17 a6 bxa6 18 ♖xa6 g4 is rather unclear, Kruppa-Golubev, Ukrainian Ch (Simferopol) 1992). For example:

a1) 17...♖xa7 18 c6 and after 18...♕a8 19 cxd7 ♖xa5 20 ♖c1! Black loses the key c7-pawn, while 18...bxc6 19 ♗xa7 c5 20 ♘d3 ♕a8 21 ♗xc5 dxc5 22 ♘xc5 ♕a7 23 ♕c2 also favours White, Kiriakov-Manik, Pardubice open 1995.

a2) 17...g4 18 c6!? g3 (better is 18...bxc6 19 ♘xc6 ♕e8!, preserving possibilities of ...g3, ...h4 and ...♗h6; Black's position is objectively dubious, but he has chances) 19 hxg3 fxg3 20 ♗xg3 h4 (after 20...♖xa7 White's best appears to be 21 ♗f2!) 21 ♗f2 bxc6 22 ♘xc6 ♕e8 (22...♗xc6 23 dxc6 ♘h5 24 f4!?, Ikonnikov-Strowsky, Metz open 1994) 23 ♘d3 ♘h5 (the alternative 23...♗h6!? is a better chance) 24 f4! ♘g3 25 f5! ♗xc6 26 ♗xg3 hxg3 27 ♗h5! with a huge advantage, Ikonnikov-Ahn, Le Touquet open 1993.

b) 14...♖f7 *(D)* is a flexible move and the main line.

W



Nevertheless, it has its drawbacks because White is not obliged to open the c-file (this reaches types of positions where ...♖f7 is especially useful) but instead can fight for the initiative in various other ways:

b1) 15 ♘b5 is not too dangerous for Black: 15...♘f6 16 ♘xa7 g4 17 ♘xc8?! (17 fxg4! ♘xe4 18 ♘xc8 ♘xf2 19 ♖xf2 e4! with complex play, Kiriakov-Shlivinskas, Jurmala jr 1992) 17...g3 18 hxg3 and now the familiar move 18...♘h5! gives Black an attack, Volodin-Purtov, Gyongyos open 1995.

b2) 15 c5!? is a sharp pawn sacrifice developed by GM Zdenko Kožul. 15...♘xc5 16 ♗xc5 dxc5 17 ♗c4! (17 a6?! b6 18 ♗c4 ♗f8! 19 d6 c6!, Kožul-A.Kuzmin, Oberwart open 1995) 17...♔h8 (17...♗f8?! 18 d6 c6 19 ♘d3! ♕xd6 20 ♕b3! and Black will lose his c5-pawn in all lines) 18 a6! bxa6 (18...b6 19 d6! and 18...♖f6 19 axb7 ♗xb7 20 ♘d3 are unpromising for Black) 19 ♘d3 ♗f8 20 ♘a4 gives White excellent compensation for the two pawns because Black's pawn-structure is destroyed. It is hard to say if the counter-sacrifice 20...g4! 21 fxg4 ♕g5 22 ♘f2 ♗d6 (as in Shirov-Nunn, Monaco blindfold 1995) solves all Black's problems, but it seems to be the critical continuation.

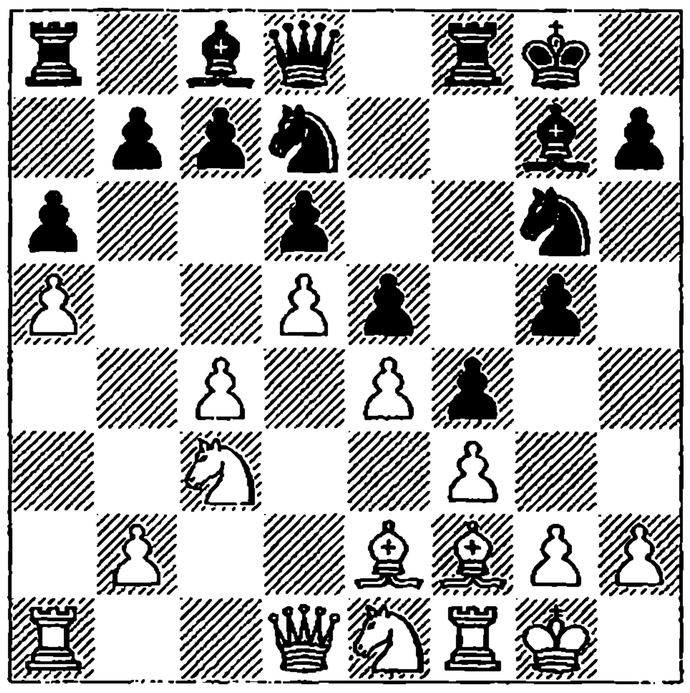
b3) 15 ♘d3!? ♘f6 (15...♗f8 is unpleasantly met by 16 ♘b5!, when 16...♘c5 does not work for Black: 17 ♘xc5 dxc5 18 d6 c6 19 ♘c7 ♖b8 20 ♗xc5 ♖xc7 21 ♗xa7!) 16 c5 ♗f8 (16...h5 17 cxd6 cxd6 18 ♘b5 g4 19 ♗xa7 and now in Sarink-Borst, Alemlo 2004 Black tried 19...♖xa7 20 ♘xa7 ♗d7 21 ♕b3 ♘h7, when Black's attack could have been stopped by 22 ♕b6!? ♕h4 23 ♔h1 g3 24 ♕g1!) 17 cxd6 (Black faces problems after 17 c6! bxc6 18 dxc6, and if 18...♗e6, then 19 ♘b4!, Volkmann-Freitag, Austrian Ch 1993/4) 17...♗xd6!? 18 ♘c5 ♘f8 19 ♕b3!? ♕e7 is rather double-edged. In Golubev-Ovseevich, Alushta 1999 White went astray by 20 ♘e6? (20 ♘xb7 was better) 20...♘xe6 21 dxe6 ♗xe6 22 ♕xb7, missing the strong move 22...♕f8!, which consolidated Black's forces. The game continued 23 ♕a6 g4 24 ♗c4 ♗xc4 25 ♕xc4 ♔h8 26 ♗h4 ♖b8 27 ♗xf6+ ♖xf6 28 fxg4?! and here 28...♗c5+!! (instead of the game continuation 28...f3? 29 gxf3 ♖xb2 30 ♘a4!) 29 ♔h1 f3! would have given Black a terrific and decisive attack: 30 gxf3 (30 g3 ♖h6! 31 g5 ♖xb2! 32 gxh6 ♖xh2+ 33 ♔xh2 ♕xh6#) 30...♖xb2! 31 ♘a4 ♖xh2+!! 32 ♔xh2 ♖h6+ 33 ♔g2 ♕f4 34 ♖h1 ♕d2+ 35 ♔g3 ♕f2#.

b4) 15 b4 ♘f6 16 c5 ♗f8 17 c6!? (17 cxd6 ♗xd6! 18 ♘d3 ♖g7 19 ♘c5 ♘f8 20 ♘b5 g4 is acceptable for Black, as in Korchnoi-Nunn, Amsterdam 1990 and other games) 17...h5 18 ♔h1! is Korchnoi's plan for White. 18...♖h7 (other possibilities are 18...g4 19 cxb7 ♗xb7 20 fxg4 hxg4 21 ♗xg4 ♘xg4 22 ♕xg4 ♗c8!? and 18...♖g7) 19 ♘b5!? (19 cxb7 ♗xb7 20 a6 ♗c8 21 ♘b5 g4 22 ♘xa7 g3 23 ♘c6, Korchnoi-Xie Jun, Wentzou (3) 1995, and here Black should play 23...♕e8 24 ♗g1 gxh2 25 ♗f2 h4 26 a7 h3 with an irrational position) and in Kiriakov-Al Sayed, Dubai open 2002 Black was crushed after 19...g4 20 ♘xa7 g3 21 ♘xc8! bxc6 22 ♗g1 gxh2 23 ♗f2 ♕xc8 24 dxc6 h4 25 ♗c4+ ♔h8 26 ♕b3 h3 27 ♗e6, etc.

c) 14...♔h8 15 ♘d3 (15 g4 fxg3 16 hxg3 ♘f6 17 ♔g2 ♖g8 18 ♖h1 ♗f8 19 ♔f1 g4! 20 fxg4 ♘e7 21 ♖h4 ♘g6 and the game Johannessen-A.Fedorov, Linares open 2002 ended in a draw by repetition) 15...♖g8 (or 15...♘f6 16 c5 ♖g8) 16 c5 ♘f6 (16...♗f8?! 17 c6 bxc6 18 ♘b4! ♘e7 19 ♘xc6 ♘xc6 20 dxc6 ♘f6 21 ♘d5 {Korchnoi-Shirov, Horgen 1994} is clearly better for White according to Shirov) 17 cxd6 cxd6 18 ♘b5 g4 19 fxg4 ♘xe4 and here, instead of 20 ♗xa7 ♗d7 (which was tested in a couple of grandmaster games and leads to complex play), interesting is 20 ♕c2!? (Krivoshei-Neumeier, Aschach 2003). It seems that Black has nothing better than 20...♘xf2 21 ♘xf2, when White's domination of the light squares should give him the better prospects.

We return to 14...a6?! *(D)*.

W



The obvious problem with this move is the weakening of the b6-square. In conjunction with ...♖f6 and ...♕e8 the ...a6 advance is often necessary (because otherwise ♘b5 can be killing), but it cannot be recommended in many other cases.

15 ♔h1!?

My opponent, who in the same year (1995) became the champion of Ukraine, is a regular practitioner of the 10 ♗e3 system for White and often finds his own ways. Previously White tried 15 ♘d3, which is also not bad, of course. 15...♘f6 16 c5 h5 17 cxd6 cxd6 18 ♘a4 g4 19 ♘b6 ♖b8 20 ♘xc8 ♖xc8!? (20...♕xc8 21 ♕a4! gxf3 22 ♗xf3 ♘g4 23 ♗b6 with a big positional advantage for White, Korchnoi-Gelfand, Tilburg 1992) 21 fxg4 ♘xe4 22 gxh5 ♘h4 23 ♗g4 ♖c4 24 ♗e6+ ♔h8 25 h6! and the play is complicated, but the objective assessment of the position should certainly favour White (Maximenko-Frolov, Nikolaev Z 1993).

15 ♘a4?! is premature and gives Black counterchances after 15...♘f6 16 c5 g4!.

15...♖f6

This was a result of improvisation over the board – and not a successful one. The attacking mechanism related with this move (...♘h4, ...♖h6) just does not work properly. A normal continuation would have been 15...h5 16 ♘a4! (Krivoshei) 16...♘f6 17 c5 g4 18 cxd6 cxd6 19 ♘b6 ♖b8.

16 b4

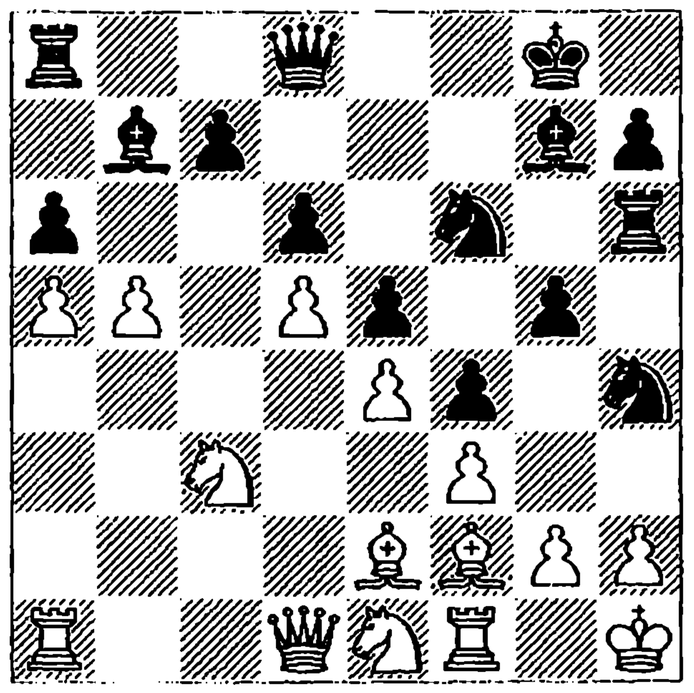
16 ♘a4 ♘h4 17 c5 (17 g3!? is also possible) 17...♖h6 18 cxd6 cxd6 19 b4 is natural and good, but White had the possibility to return to this path later.

16...♘h4 17 c5 ♖h6 18 c6?!

Even though this move does not spoil White's advantage, things now become far more complicated. After 18 cxd6! cxd6 19 ♘a4 Black has nothing better than 19...♘f6 20 ♘b6 ♖b8, trying to defend an unpleasant position. Ultra-active attempts such as 19...♕e8 20 ♖c1 ♕h5 21 ♗g1! ♘f6? 22 ♘b6 only lead Black to material losses because no satisfactory continuation of the kingside attack can be found there.

18...♘f6 19 cxb7 ♗xb7 20 b5 *(D)*

B



Black's queenside strategically collapses, but now he gets time to prepare something on the other flank.

20...♕d7 21 bxa6 ♘xg2!

Not 21...♗c8? 22 ♕a4 ♕f7 23 ♕c6 and White wins.

22 ♘xg2

22 axb7?? ♕h3 23 bxa8♕+ ♗f8! 24 ♗g1 ♘h5 would certainly suit Black, but 22 ♖g1!? is an interesting possibility. After 22...♘e3 23 ♗xe3 (not 23 axb7?? ♕h3 24 bxa8♕+ ♔f7 25 ♖g2 ♘xg2 26 ♗g1 ♘h5) 23...♗c8 24 ♖xg5 fxe3 25 ♘c2 White is clearly better, so Black should probably play 22...♘xe1.

22...♗c8!

Not 22...♕h3? 23 ♘h4! ♗c8 24 ♖g1 gxh4 25 ♗f1 and White is two tempi ahead in comparison with the game.

23 ♘h4!?

23 ♗b5 ♕h3 24 ♗g1 ♘h5 25 ♘e2 g4! is dangerous for White. It seems that he should return the piece (in order to close the h-file) anyway and he decides to do it at once.

23...gxh4 24 ♖g1

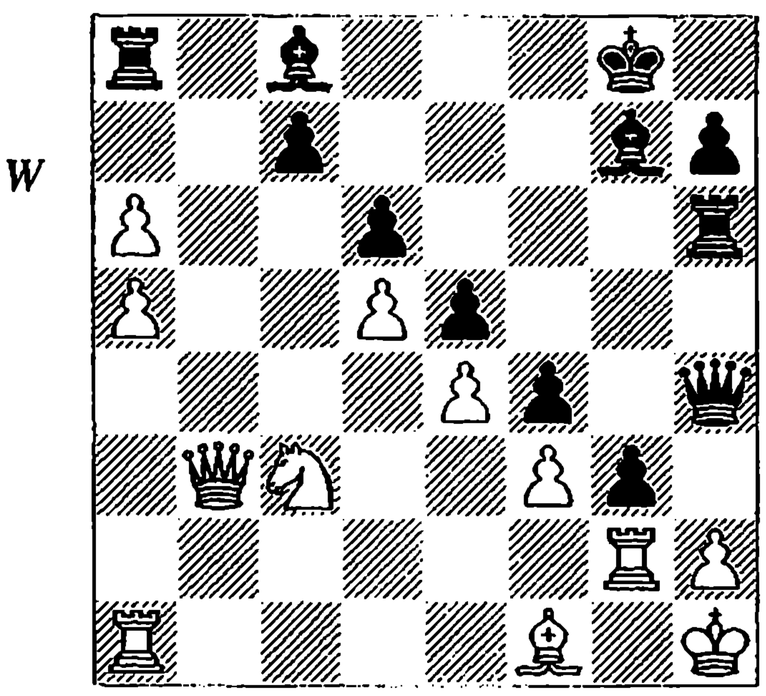
'Safety play'. Possible is 24 ♕a4!? ♕h3 with crazy variations, where White certainly has a draw, but possibly not a win: 25 ♕c6 (25 ♖g1!? ♗d7 26 ♕b3 ♘h5 27 ♕b7 ♖f8 28 a7

♘g3+ 29 ♗xg3 hxg3 30 ♖g2 ♕h5 31 a8♕ ♗h3 32 ♖ag1 ♗c8 33 ♖f1 ♗h3 and if White avoids repetition by 34 ♖ff2 then 34...♖g6!) 25...♘g4!? 26 ♗g1 (26 fxg4 f3 27 ♖g1 fxe2 28 ♕xa8? ♕f3+ 29 ♖g2 h3 30 ♕xc8+ ♗f8 31 ♖ag1 hxg2+ 32 ♖xg2 ♕xc3) 26...♘f6 27 ♗f2 with a repetition of moves (instead, 27 ♖f2 ♘h5 28 ♖g2 ♘g3+ 29 ♖xg3 hxg3 30 ♗f1 ♕h5 is dangerous for White: 31 ♕xa8 ♕xf3+ 32 ♗g2 ♕g4 33 a7 f3 34 ♖a2 ♗f8!).

24...♘h5 25 ♗f1

According to Krivoshei's annotations in the magazine *Sach Profil*, 25 ♕b3 ♘g3+ 26 ♗xg3 hxg3 27 ♖g2 deserved attention here, with the idea 27...♕e7(?) 28 ♕b7!.

25...♘g3+ 26 ♗xg3 hxg3 27 ♖g2 ♕e7!? 28 ♕b3 ♕h4 *(D)*



29 a7

In the post-mortem analysis, Alex Stripunsky suggested 29 ♕b7!. There, instead of accepting the queen sacrifice, Black should play 29...♗h3!! and after 30 ♕xa8+ ♗f8 31 ♔g1 ♗xg2 32 ♗xg2 gxh2+ 33 ♔h1 ♖g6 34 ♕c8 ♖xg2! 35 ♕e6+ ♔g7 36 ♔xg2 ♕g3+ 37 ♔h1 ♕xf3+ it all ends in perpetual check.

29...♗h3 30 ♕b8+?

In time-trouble White underestimates Black's threats. 30 ♖aa2!? is much better, when the outcome is still hard to predict.

30...♗f8 31 ♖aa2

If 31 ♔g1 ♗xg2 32 ♗xg2 gxh2+ 33 ♔h1, then 33...♖g6!, threatening 34...♕f2.

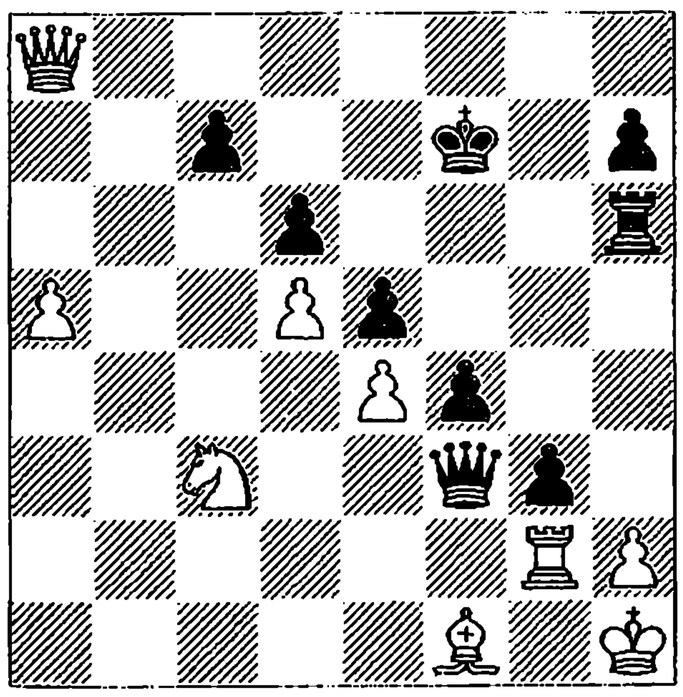
31...♕h5!

The key idea – White cannot protect his f3-pawn.

32 ♕xa8 ♗xg2+ 33 ♖xg2 ♕xf3 34 ♕xf8+?

This allows Black to unpin his g-pawn. 34 ♔g1 ♕e3+ 35 ♔h1 is necessary, when Black can safely play for a win by 35...♖xh2+!? 36 ♖xh2 gxh2 37 ♘e2 ♕f2 38 ♕xf8+ ♔xf8 39 a8♕+ ♔f7.

34...♔xf8 35 a8♕+ ♔f7 *(D)*



36 ♔g1?

The final mistake, but 36 ♕a7 ♖xh2+!? (also possible is 36...♕xf1+ 37 ♕g1 ♕f3) 37 ♔g1 ♖xg2+ 38 ♗xg2 ♕xc3 is objectively winning for Black.

36...gxh2+ 37 ♖xh2 ♕g3+ 38 ♖g2 ♕e3+ 39 ♖f2 ♖g6+ 40 ♗g2 ♕e1+ 41 ♖f1 ♕e3+ 42 ♖f2 f3 0-1

Game 5

Tošić – Golubev

Alushta 1994

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 5 ♘f3 0-0 6 ♗e2 e5 7 0-0 ♘c6 8 d5 ♘e7 9 a4

A rare move.

9...a5 10 ♘e1 ♘d7 11 ♗e3 f5 12 f3 f4

Simpler is 12...♘c5!?. Korchnoi-Kasparov, Barcelona (World Cup) 1989 continued 13 ♘d3 b6 14 b4 ♘xd3 15 ♕xd3 axb4 16 ♘b5. Now 16...f4?! would have been strategically wrong: after 17 ♗d2 White is ready to play ♗xb4 and a5, while Black needs too many tempi to create anything real on the kingside. Kasparov played 16...♔h8!, planning ...♘g8 and ...♘f6 (or ...♗h6) with sufficient counterchances.

13 ♗f2 g5 *(D)*

The game has transposed into 9 ♘e1 ♘d7 10 ♗e3 f5 11 f3 f4 12 ♗f2 g5 13 a4 a5.

14 ♘b5

The main direction is 14 ♘d3 b6 with the following interesting lines (each of which can confidently be assessed as 'unclear'):

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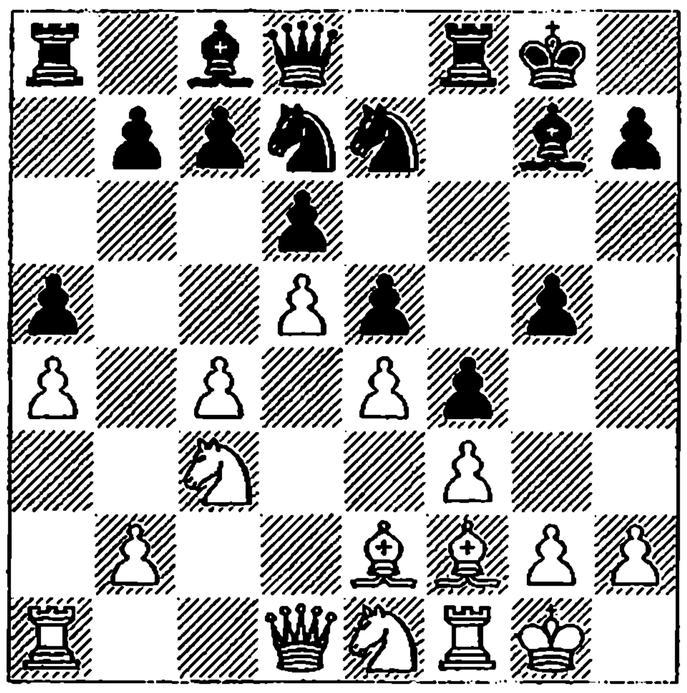
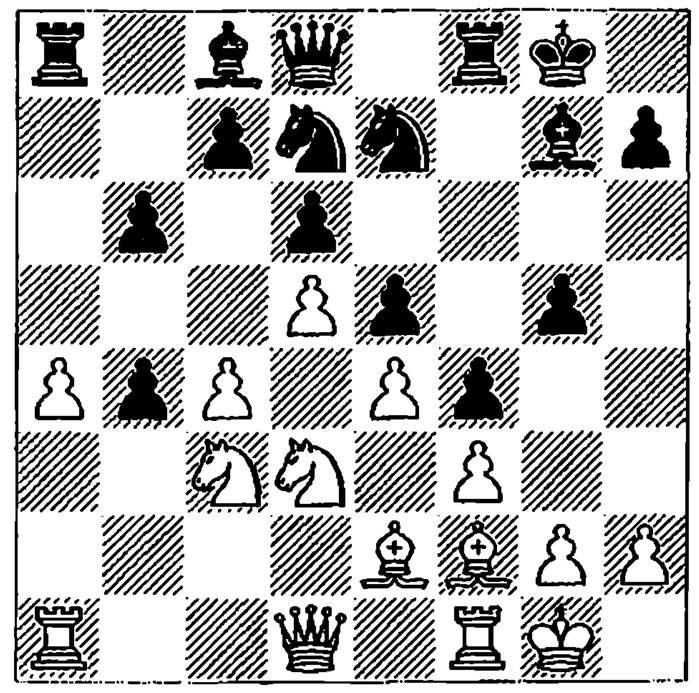


a) 15 ♘b5 ♘f6 16 b4 g4!? gives Black sufficient counterplay.

b) 15 ♗e1 ♘f6! (15...h5?! 16 b4 axb4 17 ♘b5! transposes to the note to White's 17th move) 16 ♘f2 (16 b4 axb4, and now 17 ♘b5 transposes to line 'c1'; instead White can play 17 ♘xb4 and if Black wishes to prevent the ♘d3-f2 transfer, he can try 17...h5!?, when 18 a5 bxa5 19 ♘c6 ♘xc6 20 dxc6 ♕e8 21 ♘d5 ♖f7! should suit him) 16...h5 17 h3 (White overprotects the g4-square; he can also try the flexible 17 ♖a3!? which can also be answered flexibly – by 17...♖f7 18 ♘b5 ♗f8, not yet defining where the e7-knight will go) 17...♔h8!? (an important idea in this type of closed position – Black transfers the knight to h6 to support his ...g4 advance; 17...♘g6 is, generally, more standard but it is less advisable under the circumstances) 18 b4 ♘eg8! (but not 18...axb4?! 19 ♘b5 and White develops his play by ♗xb4 and a5) 19 bxa5 bxa5! 20 c5 (instead, White can concentrate on winning the a5-pawn by ♘b5, ♗d2 and ♕e1, but it is difficult to execute this plan while simultaneously preventing all Black's counterplay related with ...g4) 20...♘h6 21 ♘b5 ♖f7! 22 cxd6 (22 ♘a3 ♗f8 23 ♘c4 g4!? with counterplay, Zakhartsov-Voicu, Alushta open 2005) 22...cxd6 23 ♖c1 ♗f8 24 ♕c2 (24 ♖c4 and now 24...♖g7 25 ♕c2 g4 26 ♗xa5! ♕e8 was P.H.Nielsen-Kotronias, Hastings Premier 2003/4, when the critical continuation is 27 fxg4 hxg4 28 ♘c7; Grandmaster Avrukh suggested that Black should avoid it by playing 24...g4!?) 24...♘e8 25 ♕b3 (deviating from the stem game of the 17...♔h8!? variation, Bachmann-Frolov, Berlin open 1994, where White played 25 ♕d3 but soon returned the queen to d1) 25...♖g7 26 ♖c6 ♗d7 27 ♗d2. At this point P.H.Nielsen-Golubev, ACP Internet blitz 2004 continued 27...♗xc6 28 dxc6 with reasonable compensation for White, but I suspect that 27...g4!? is stronger.

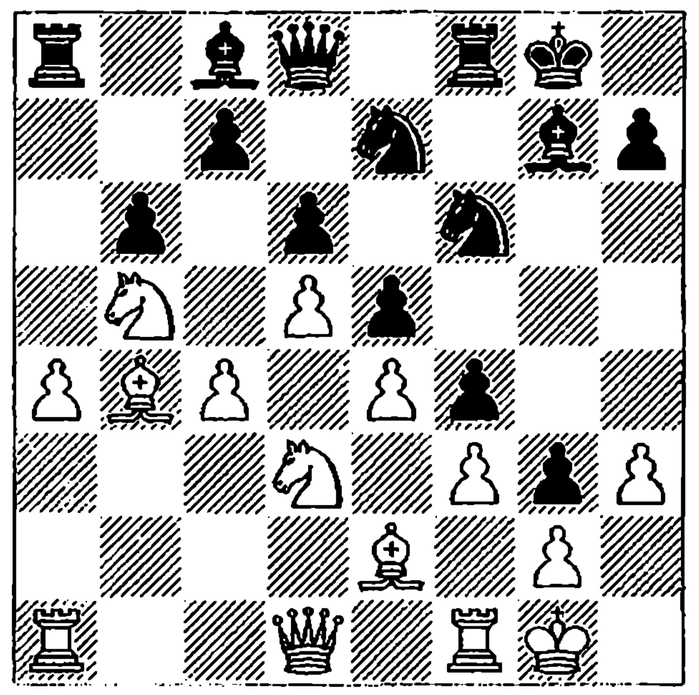
c) 15 b4 axb4 *(D)* and now:

W



c1) 16 ♘b5 ♘f6! (the early ...♘f6 is as a rule preferable for Black to an early ...h5; the chance to play ...g4 without support from the h-pawn is more important than preserving the possibility of ...♘c5, which can rarely prevent White's queenside play in any case; after the immediate 16...♘c5 a good answer is 17 ♗e1!?) 17 ♗e1 g4! 18 ♗xb4 g3 (the main move, which does not look convincing as of now; 18...h5?! transposes to note 'c' to White's 17th move below, but 18...♘g6! may well be the strongest) 19 h3 *(D)* and now:

B



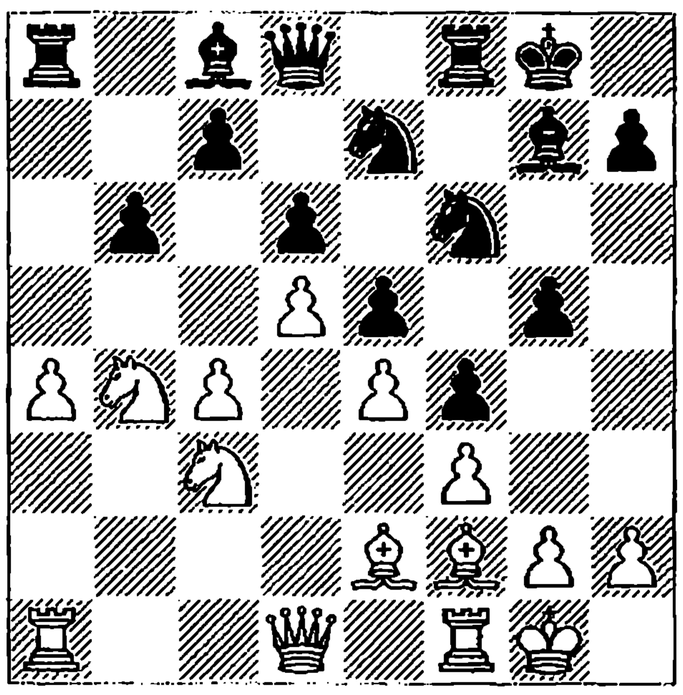
c11) 19...♘e8 20 ♕d2 ♘g6 21 ♖fc1 ♘h4 22 ♘e1 ♖f6 23 ♗f1 is a kind of position which White essentially wants to have: his kingside seems to be safe, and on the other flank he will develop the initiative after an a5 advance. Still, Black preserves chances even in such a situation: 23...♖h6 24 ♖c3 ♗f8 25 ♖ca3 ♗d7 26 a5 bxa5 27 ♖xa5 ♖xa5 28 ♖xa5 ♕b8 29 ♖a6 and now in Sulava-Nevednichy, Bad Wörishofen 2000

Black developed a counterattack by 29...♗xh3!? 30 gxh3 g2 31 ♗xg2 ♘xg2 32 ♘xg2 ♕c8.

c12) 19...♗xh3!? 20 gxh3 ♕d7 21 ♕c2 (21 ♔g2? loses to 21...♘g6 22 ♖h1 ♘h4+ 23 ♔g1 ♘xe4! 24 fxe4 f3) 21...♕xh3 22 ♗d1 ♘g6 23 ♕g2 (not 23 ♘xc7 ♘h4 24 ♘e1 ♘h5! followed by 25...g2) 23...♕h6 24 ♘xc7 (an improvement over 24 ♕h1 ♘h4, when 25 ♘e1? ♘xe4! was Koutsin-Frolov, Kiev (Platonov mem) 1995, but White can play the stronger 25 ♖e1!, as suggested by IM Andrew Martin) 24...♘h4 25 ♕d2! (avoiding ideas of ...♘xe4 and ...f3) and in Persson-Calzolari, corr. 1998 Black did not find a way to prove the strength of his attack: 25...g2 26 ♖e1 ♘xf3+ 27 ♗xf3 ♕h1+ 28 ♔f2 ♕h4+ 29 ♔e2 ♘xe4 30 ♗xe4 f3+ 31 ♔d1 f2 32 ♗xg2 fxe1♕+ 33 ♘xe1 ♕g4+ 34 ♗f3 ♖xf3 35 ♘xf3 ♖f8 36 ♖a3 ♖xf3 37 ♖xf3 ♕xf3+ 38 ♔c2 +–.

c2) 16 ♘xb4 ♘f6! *(D)* and then:

W



c21) The waiting 17 ♖a3 ♗d7 18 ♘b5 was tried in Yusupov-Kasparov, Erevan OL 1996, where Black had good play after the flexible 18...♔h8!?, while 18...g4 19 fxg4 ♘xe4 (as I once used) seems to be playable as well.

c22) 17 ♘d3 may transpose to line 'c241' after 17...h5 18 ♘b5 ♘g6 19 ♗e1 g4, but gives Black the additional possibility of 17...♗a6!?, when 18 ♘b4 ♗c8 repeats.

c23) 17 ♘c6!? ♘xc6 18 dxc6 ♕e8 19 ♘d5 does not give much for White after 19...♖f7!, as proved in a few games.

c24) 17 ♗e1!? h5!? 18 ♘d3 g4 19 ♘b5 and now:

c241) 19...♘g6 20 a5 bxa5 21 ♖xa5 (21 ♗xa5? is typically refuted by 21...♖xa5! 22 ♖xa5 c6) is a position from Kožul-Rogić, Bled open 1997. Ponomariov and I once briefly looked at this game and decided that 21...♖xa5! 22 ♗xa5 ♖f7 23 c5 g3! with such ideas as 24 ♘xd6 ♘xd5 or 24 cxd6 ♘xe4!? may suit Black. It is hard to be sure, however, as the position is totally crazy.

c242) One possibility to deviate earlier is 19...g3!? 20 hxg3 fxg3 21 ♗xg3 ♘g6, as in Ernazarov-Aleshnia, e-mail 2001, where Black sacrifices just a pawn.

14...h5?!

At the time when the game was played, the theory of this line had only started to develop and the disadvantages of the early ...h5 were not yet fully appreciated.

Correct is 14...b6! with a likely transition to 14 ♘d3 lines by 15 ♘d3 (or 15 b4 axb4 16 ♘d3).

15 ♘d3! b6 16 b4! axb4 *(D)*

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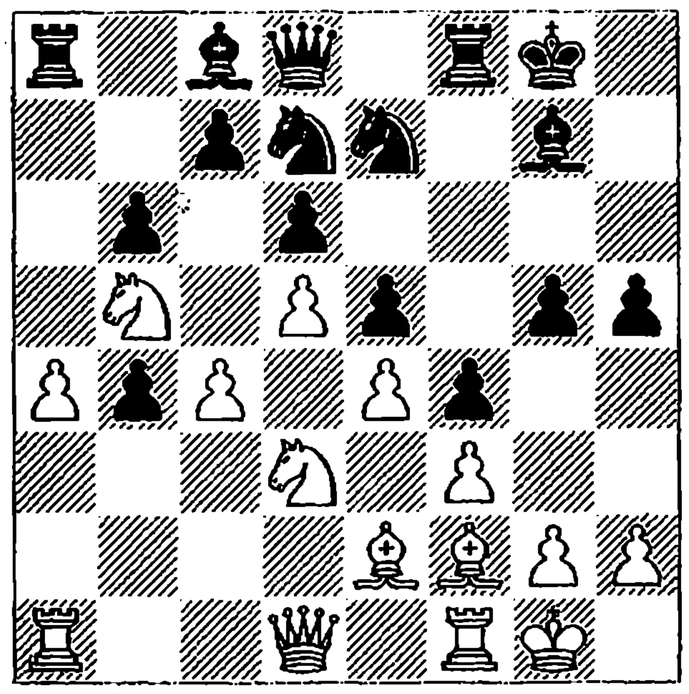

This position, which may be assessed as promising for White, can also arise by another move-order: 14 ♘d3 b6 15 b4 axb4 16 ♘b5 and now 16...h5?! (instead of 16...♘f6).

17 a5!?

An interesting idea. In almost all other examples White has opted for 17 ♗e1. Then:

a) 17...♘c5 18 ♗xb4 gives White the better chances.

b) If 17...g4!? (with the ideas 18 fxg4!? ♘f6 and 18 ♘xb4 ♘c5!?), then 18 ♗xb4 g3 19 h3 looks sensible for White. However, he must be extremely careful and disallow any blows such as 19...♘g6 20 ♖e1 ♘f6 21 ♗f1?! ♘g4!, Reinderman-Degraeve, Groningen open 1996.

c) 17...♘f6 18 ♗xb4 g4 (18...♗d7 19 a5 with pressure for White) 19 a5 bxa5 20 ♖xa5 ♖b8 21 ♖a7! g3 *(D)* and here:

c1) 22 ♗a5?! ♘exd5 23 exd5 ♘xd5 is not clear – Frolov.

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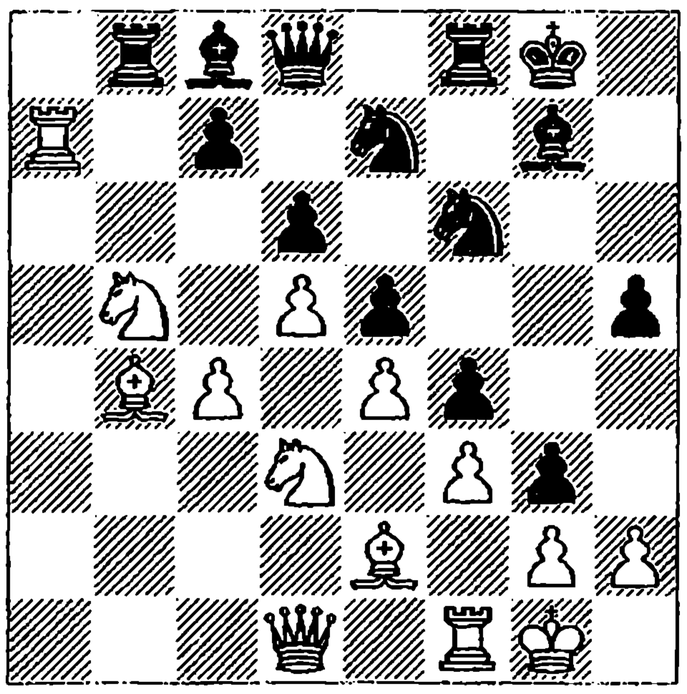


c2) 22 ♖xc7?! ♘e8 23 ♗a5 ♖xb5 24 ♖xc8 ♕xa5 25 ♖xe8 ♖xe8 26 cxb5 is another murky line.

c3) In Koutsin-V.Babula, Prerov 1995 White played 22 h3!?, claiming later in his annotations that 22...♗xh3 23 gxh3 ♕d7 would not give Black sufficient compensation after 24 ♕c2 ♕xh3 25 ♗d1 – probably this is correct, because Black's sacrifices on d5 and b5 do not seem to work properly.

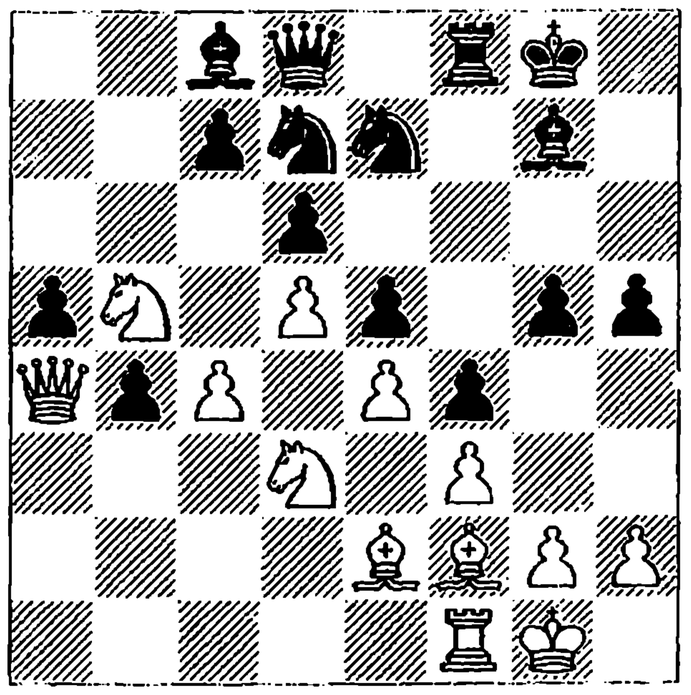
c4) 22 ♘xc7!? ♘xe4? (extremely brave, but objectively bad – better is 22...♘g6!?) 23 fxe4 ♘c6 (a logical continuation of Black's operation) 24 dxc6 ♕h4 25 hxg3 (25 h3? ♗xh3 with the main idea 26 gxh3 ♕xh3 27 ♖f2 f3! and, despite being three pieces down, Black is in the game) 25...fxg3 26 ♖xf8+ ♗xf8 27 ♗f3! ♗g4! 28 ♘f4!? (one of the winning moves at White's disposal at this point) 28...♕h2+ 29 ♔f1 ♖xb4 30 ♕d5+? (missing victory, the only clear road to which is 30 ♗xg4! ♖b1 31 ♔e2!! ♖xd1 32 ♘cd5! ♖e1+ 33 ♔d3) 30...♔h8 31 ♘g6+ ♔g7 (incredibly, White is not able to deliver checkmate and it is he who is in trouble now) 32 ♘e8+? (missing the only way to draw: 32 ♘e6++! ♔f6! 33 ♖f7+! ♔xf7 34 ♘xe5+! dxe5 35 ♘xf8+ ♔xf8 36 ♕d6+ with perpetual check) 32...♔h6 33 ♕d2+ (33 ♖h7+ ♔g5!) 33...♔xg6 34 ♕xb4 ♕h1+ and after a few more moves White resigned in Savchenko-Frolov, Nikolaev Z 1993. This critical last-round game between two of my compatriots was perhaps the most dramatic King's Indian game that I have personally witnessed! With the help of this victory, Artur Frolov qualified for the Interzonal tournament, which, unfortunately, was the peak of his career. He gradually lost interest in chess and stopped playing in the mid-1990s.

17...♖xa5?!

Stronger is 17...bxa5, when both 18 ♘xb4 and 18 c5!? preserve compensation for White.

18 ♖xa5 bxa5 19 ♕a4! *(D)*

B



Black's pawn-structure is so vulnerable that even being (temporarily) two pawns down, White has a very good position. Now 19...♘b6 20 ♕xa5 ♘xc4 21 ♕xc7!? does not look nice for Black. After 19...c6 (or 19...c5) White plays 20 ♘xd6. If 19...♘f6 (with the remarkable idea 20 ♕xa5 c5!), then 20 c5!. Being unable to find a satisfactory defence, I decided to play for maximum activity and gave away three pawns, one after another.

19...g4!?

19...♘g6 20 ♕xa5 g4 makes no difference compared to the game continuation.

20 ♕xa5

Not 20 fxg4?! ♘f6!.

20...♘g6 21 ♕xc7!

Simpler and stronger than 21 fxg4!?.

21...g3 22 hxg3 fxg3 23 ♗xg3 ♕g5 *(D)*

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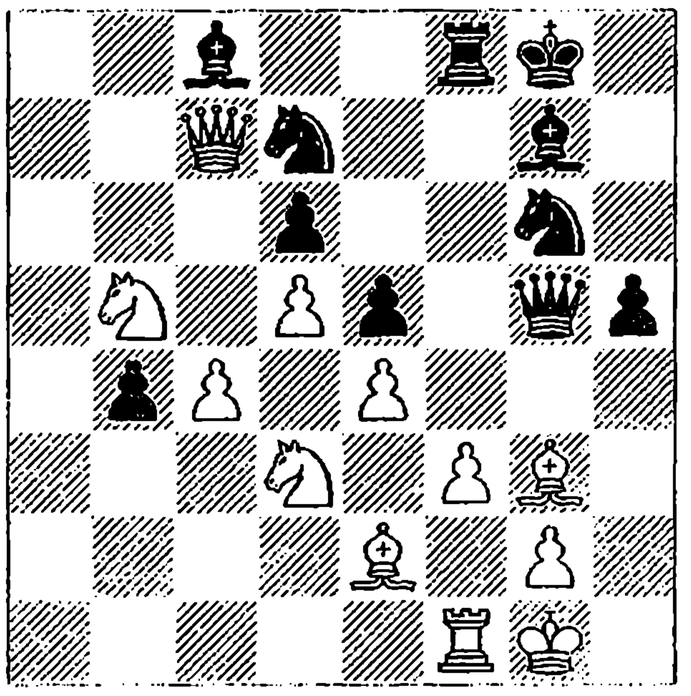

24 ♗h2?

24 ♗f2!? was a superior retreat, though after 24...♘f6 Black has at least some play in return for the material.

However, 24 ♘xd6! ♕xg3 25 ♘xc8 was a real refutation. Such a continuation may (and should) look dangerous for White as the dark squares around his king are weakened. However, the mechanism of this particular position works in White's favour – he manages to preserve the extra material and defend his king just in time: 25...♖f7 (25...♗h6 26 ♕xd7 ♗e3+ 27 ♔h1 ♕h4+ 28 ♕h3; after 25...♘h4, 26 ♘e7+! wins most easily) 26 ♘d6 ♗h6 27 ♕d8+! (not 27 ♘xf7? ♗e3+ 28 ♖f2 ♘f4 and Black probably escapes) 27...♘df8 28 ♘xf7 ♗e3+ 29 ♔h1! ♔xf7 30 ♕c8! (or 30 f4!) and the game is over.

24...♘c5!

Now Black's position is full of life.

25 ♘xc5

Other lines also look double-edged: 25 ♘f2 ♘h4 26 g3 and now even 26...♘xe4!? can be considered. Or 25 ♖f2 ♘xd3 26 ♗xd3 ♘h4!?. If 25 ♘xd6, then 25...♘xd3 26 ♗xd3 ♗h3 27 ♖f2 ♖xf3.

25...♕e3+ 26 ♖f2 dxc5 *(D)*

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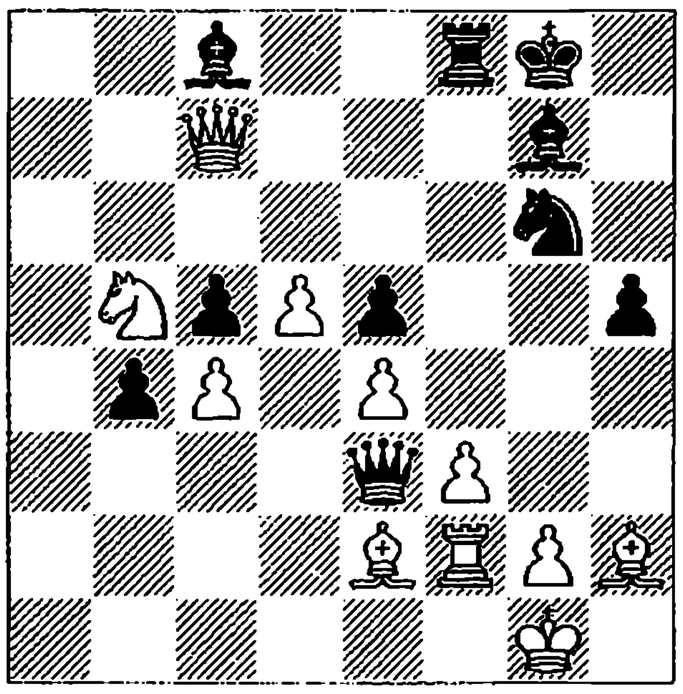

27 ♕b6?

White was probably concerned about Black's b-pawn, but it was necessary to return his knight to play: 27 ♘d6! with chances for both sides. For example, 27...♘f4 (if 27...b3 28 ♘xc8 b2 29 ♕b6! ♕c1+, then 30 ♗f1!? b1♕ 31 ♕xg6 seems to be strong) 28 ♗xf4 (28 ♗f1 ♗h3!?) 28...exf4 29 ♘xc8 ♗d4 30 ♘e7+ ♔h8 31 ♘g6+ ♔g8 32 ♘e7+ with perpetual check.

27...♘f4! 28 ♗f1?! *(D)*

After 28 ♗xf4 exf4 Black is better, but not yet winning.

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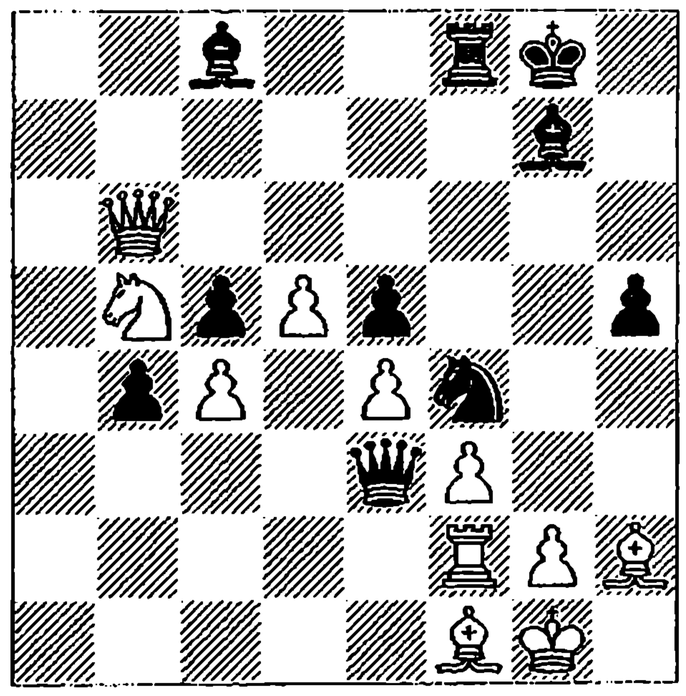

28...♘h3+! 29 gxh3 ♖xf3 30 ♕d8+ ♗f8

Now the defence 31 ♕h4 does not help because of 31...♗e7!. That is what White probably missed.

31 ♗g3 ♖xg3+ 32 ♗g2 ♖xg2+ 33 ♔xg2 ♗xh3+ 34 ♔h2 ♕xf2+ 35 ♔xh3 ♕f3+ 36 ♔h2 ♕f4+ 37 ♔h3 b3 38 d6 b2 39 ♘c3? *(D)*

39 ♘a3 with the idea 39...♕f3+ 40 ♔h2 ♕xa3? 41 ♕g5+ ♗g7? 42 d7 could allow White to resist longer.

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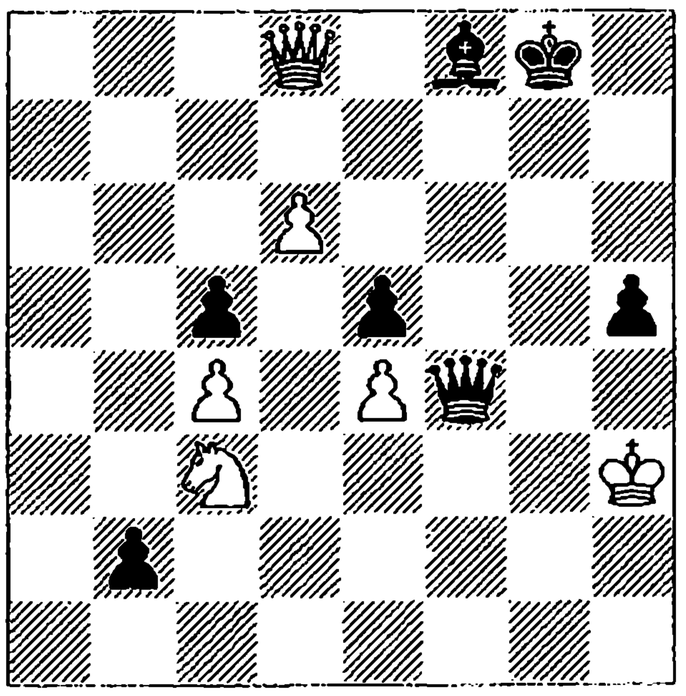


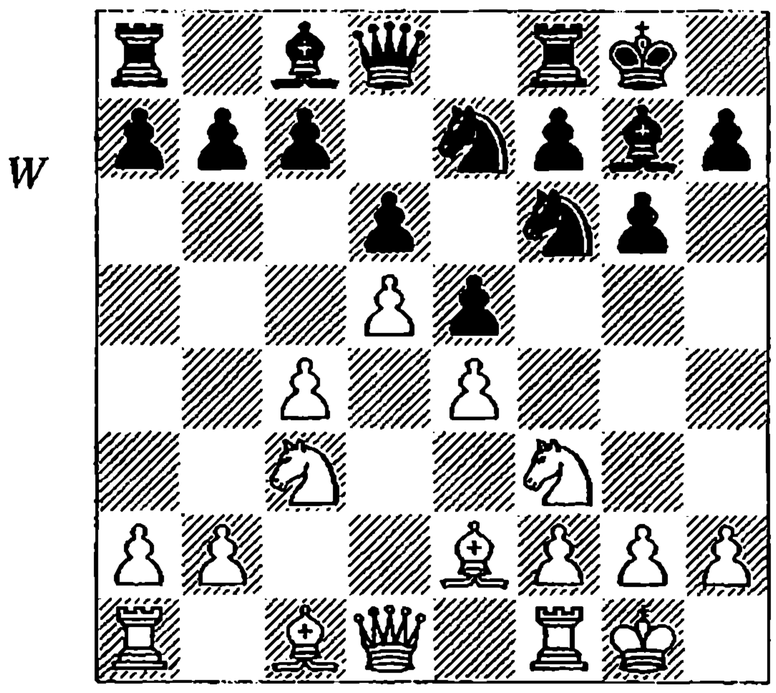
39...♕f3+ 40 ♔h2 ♕xc3 41 ♕g5+ ♗g7 42 d7 ♕c2+

Now Black has this check, so White resigned.

0-1

2 Classical: 9 ♘d2 and 9 b4

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 5 ♘f3 0-0 6 ♗e2 e5 7 0-0 ♘c6 8 d5 ♘e7 *(D)*



Besides 9 ♘e1, White's two other main moves are 9 ♘d2 and 9 b4 (the latter is known as the Bayonet Attack).

They are, generally speaking, two independent lines, but I decided to examine them in the same chapter because they are related to the same strategic plan of creating pressure on the queenside by ♘d2, b4, c5, ♗a3 (with the possible inclusion of a4) and ♘c4. It is considered to be dangerous for Black to ignore this plan and continue (in the spirit of the 9 ♘e1 system) with 9...♘e8 or 9...♘d7. However, things are not absolutely clear there and I shall include below two games featuring 9...♘e8; this is a line where 9 ♘d2 and 9 b4 may intersect.

Other, less risky, answers to 9 ♘d2 and 9 b4 lead to different types of positions.

9 ♘d2 prevents 9...♘h5 and thereby limits Black's possibilities, but on the other hand places White's minor pieces a bit awkwardly, which gives Black reason to undertake some action on the queenside by 9...a5 or 9...c5, preventing the free development of White's forces (b4, c5, ♘c4).

After the more straightforward and very popular 9 b4 Black's main move is 9...♘h5 (I shall provide material on 9...a5 as well). Nowadays 9 b4 ♘h5 10 ♖e1 is certainly one of the most topical lines of the entire King's Indian.

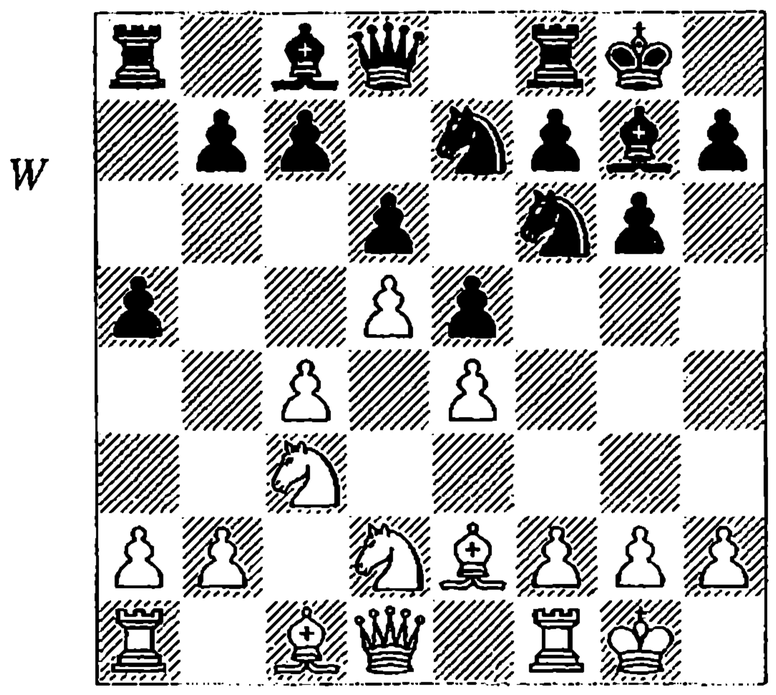
Game 6

Notkin – Golubev

Ukrainian open Ch (Yalta) 1996

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 5 ♘f3 0-0 6 ♗e2 e5 7 0-0 ♘c6 8 d5 ♘e7 9 ♘d2 a5 *(D)*

9...c5 is the second most popular move. The main continuation then is 10 ♖b1 ♘e8 11 b4 b6 12 bxc5 bxc5 13 ♘b3 (or 13 ♕a4!?) 13...f5 14 ♗g5 h6 and if 15 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 16 ♘a5, then 16...♘f6 17 ♘c6 ♕e8, but White can also fight for the initiative by 10 dxc6 bxc6 (10...♘xc6?! 11 ♘b3! ♗e6 and now not 12 ♗g5?! ♘d4!, Gleizerov-Golubev, Bela Crkva open 1990, but 12 ♗e3! with a positional advantage) 11 b4 d5 12 ♗a3!, preparing 13 b5. In both cases Black has some problems to solve.



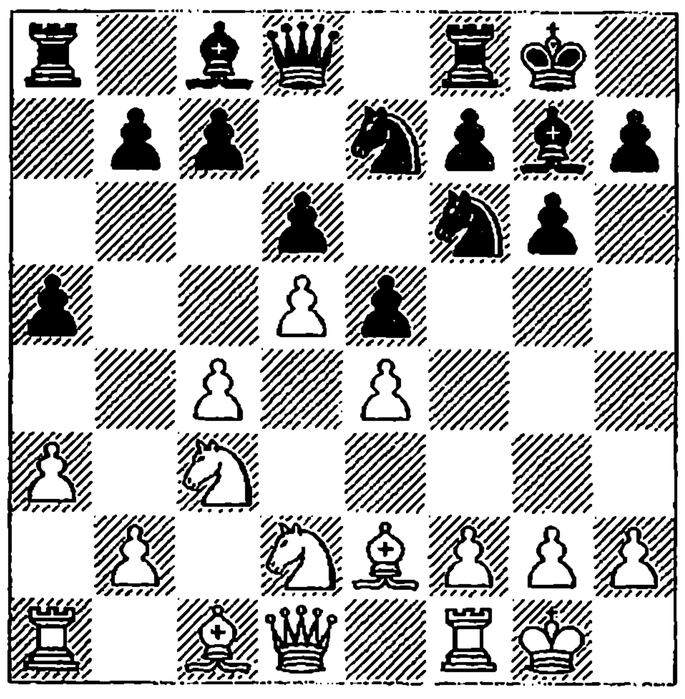
10 a3 *(D)*

10 ♖b1 usually transposes to the main lines with a3 after 10...♘d7 (or 10...♗d7!? 11 b3 c6 12 a3) 11 a3.

Sometimes White opts for 10 b3. The main line then seems to be 10...♘d7 (10...♔h8!?, as I played against *Fritz4* in Senden open 1996, looks like a sensible waiting move: if 11 ♗a3?! then 11...c5! 12 dxc6 bxc6 is good for Black; in Karpov-Kasparov, Seville Wch (17) 1987 Black opted for 10...c5 11 a3 ♘e8 12 ♖b1 f5 13 b4 axb4 14 axb4 b6 and White, despite losing a tempo preparing b4, kept a slight edge) 11 ♗a3

(this is the main idea behind 10 b3) 11...f5 (11...♘c5 12 b4 axb4 13 ♗xb4 ♘a6 14 ♗a3 b6 15 ♘b3 f5 16 ♗c1!?, as in Mikhalchishin-Braga, Mexico U-26 Wcht 1977, gives White some advantage) 12 b4 axb4 13 ♗xb4 b6 14 a4 ♘f6 with reasonable chances for Black. White cannot continue his queenside play by 15 a5?! because 15...c5! 16 dxc6 ♘xc6 wins a pawn for Black.

B



10...♗d7!?

Another attempt to play on the queenside, 10...c6(?!), is less successful: 11 ♖b1! (rather innocuous is 11 dxc6 bxc6 12 ♖b1 and here Black can play 12...c5 or 12...d5!?; the latter move occurred in Van Laatum-Golubev, Groningen open 1993 where after 13 b4 axb4 14 axb4 ♗e6 15 b5 d4 16 ♘a4 cxb5 17 cxb5 d3 18 ♗f3 ♕d6 19 ♖a1 ♕b4 20 ♗a3 ♕xa4 21 ♗xe7 ♕xa1 22 ♕xa1 ♖xa1 23 ♖xa1 ♖e8 an approximately equal endgame arose; later Black tried too creatively to obtain winning chances and at some point was completely lost, but it had little to do with the opening) 11...b5?! (after 11...♕c7, 12 dxc6!? bxc6 13 b4 axb4 14 axb4 d5 15 b5 is interesting for White, Blees-Moskalenko, Budapest 1990) 12 dxc6! (12 b4?! axb4 13 axb4 bxc4 14 dxc6 ♘xc6 15 ♘xc4 ♘d4 is OK for Black) 12...b4 13 axb4 axb4 14 ♘b5! ♘xc6 15 ♘b3! ♗e6 (15...♘xe4 16 ♗f3! ♗f5 17 g4! ♘xf2 18 ♖xf2 ♗xb1 19 ♗xc6 seems to favour White) 16 ♕d3 ♘e8 17 ♗e3 f5 18 f3 with an obvious positional advantage for White, Epishin-Nunn, Vienna 1991.

The most popular continuation for Black, 10...♘d7 11 ♖b1 f5 12 b4 ♔h8 and then, for example, 13 ♕c2 ♘g8 14 exf5 gxf5 15 f4 ♘e7, has never looked attractive to me.

11 b3 *(D)*

After 11 ♖b1 there follows 11...a4! 12 b4 axb3 13 ♘xb3 b6 and White's rook on b1 does not help him to advance the a-pawn. After 14 ♖a1, 14...♘e8 gives Black reasonable play.

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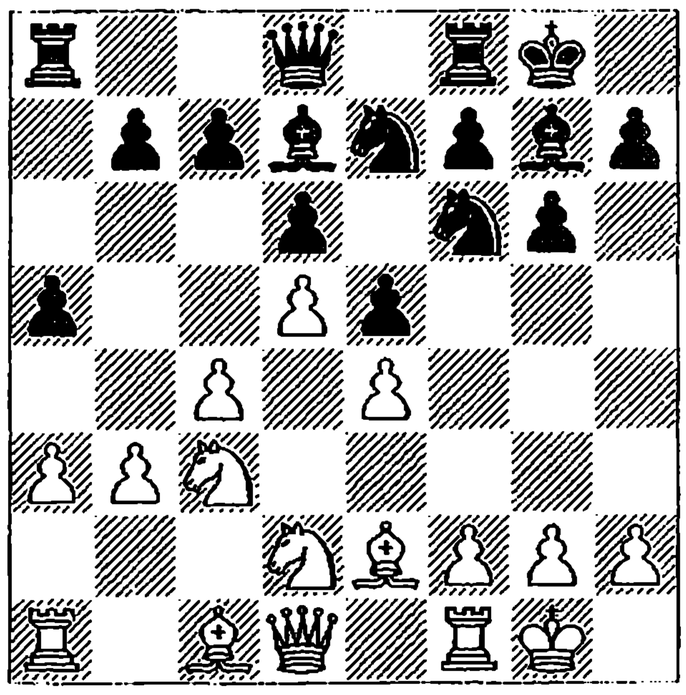


11...♘c8!?

An interesting idea, first used by Geller. Black transfers the knight to b6, wishing to have the ...♘a4 resource after White's ♖b1 and b4. This plan may work very well against an unprepared opponent but objectively 11...c6!? is more critical. The possible continuations are:

a) After 12 ♖b1 Uhlmann's move 12...b5!? 13 dxc6 b4! 14 ♘d5 (14 cxd7 bxc3 15 ♘f3 ♘xe4) 14...♘xc6 15 ♘xf6+ ♗xf6 16 ♘f3 ♕e7 allows Black to equalize.

b) 12 ♖a2!? (Mikhail Gurevich's speciality) 12...♕b8 (12...♔h8!? with the idea 13 b4 axb4 14 axb4 ♖xa2 15 ♘xa2 b5) 13 ♖c2 ♖c8 14 ♗d3 cxd5 15 cxd5 b5 16 b4 axb4 17 axb4 ♘h5 with chances for both sides, Chuchelov-Bologan, Istanbul Ech 2003.

c) 12 ♗b2 c5!? (the alternative is 12...♕b6) 13 ♘b5 ♘e8 14 b4 axb4 15 axb4 ♖xa1 16 ♕xa1 cxb4 (the immediate 16...♗h6 allows the dangerous sacrifice 17 ♘xd6! ♘xd6 18 bxc5) 17 ♕a4 ♗h6 18 ♕xb4 ♗xb5 (18...f5 19 c5!?) 19 cxb5 f5 20 exf5 (rather unpromising for White is 20 ♘c4 fxe4 21 ♗g4 ♘f5 22 ♗a3 ♕h4! with the idea 23 ♗xf5 ♖xf5 24 ♘xd6? ♖h5 25 h3 ♗f8) 20...♘xf5 21 ♘e4 ♘f6 with approximate equality (but not 21...♕b6?! 22 ♗g4!, preventing 22...♘f6, Gleizerov-Chuchelov, Leeuwarden open 1995).

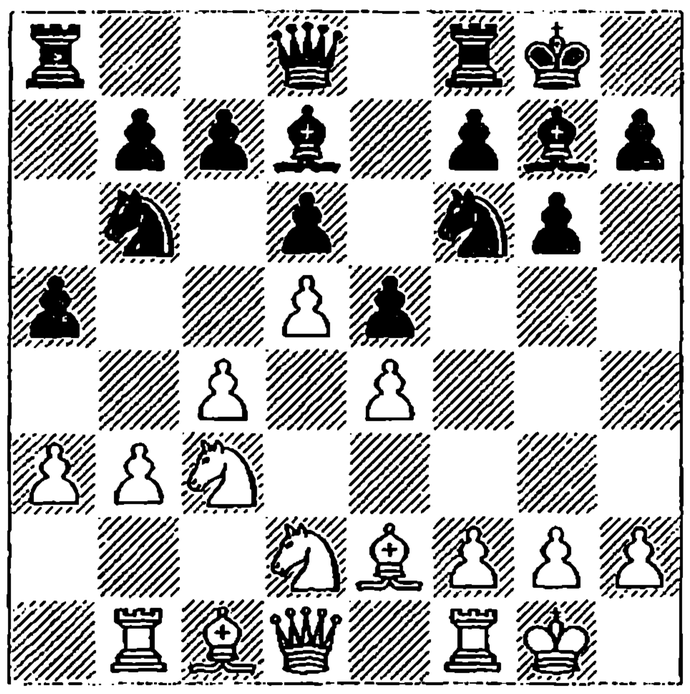
12 ♖b1

12 ♗b2!? ♘b6 13 ♕c2 is not played often by White, but it looks logical for him to keep the rook on a1. Black can try 13...♕c7 (if 13...c6, then 14 dxc6!, Hammes-Smirin, Berlin open

1997, when 14...bxc6?! is answered by 15 c5!) 14 b4 ♖fc8.

12...♘b6 *(D)*

W



13 ♔h1

A somewhat mysterious move. 13 ♕c2 ♕e7 (after 13...♗h6 14 b4 axb4 15 axb4 ♘a4 16 ♘xa4!? ♖xa4, 17 c5! dxc5 18 bxc5 ♗xd2 19 ♗xd2 ♖xe4 {Hammes-Golubev, Limburg rpd 1997} 20 ♗g5! gives White very good compensation) 14 b4 axb4 15 axb4 ♘a4 was successfully played by Smirin as Black on several occasions.

13...♗h6 14 ♗b2 ♕e7 15 ♗a1

Not a pleasant retreat, but 15 b4?! axb4 16 axb4 ♘a4! cannot suit White.

15...♘e8 16 b4 axb4 17 axb4 ♘f6!?

An interesting possibility. I could also have continued with the planned 17...f5, but the knight's retreat allows Black to begin a fight on the queenside.

18 ♘b3 ♘a4! 19 ♘xa4?

My future colleague in *Chess Today*, who was leading in the Yalta tournament, blunders a pawn. More natural continuations are 19 ♕d3 ♘xc3 20 ♗xc3 ♖a3!? with the idea 21 ♗b2 ♖xb3 22 ♕xb3 ♘xe4 23 ♗c3 ♗d2!, and 19 ♕c2 ♘xc3 20 ♗xc3 c6!? with approximately equal chances.

19...♖xa4 20 f3 ♖xb4 21 ♕e1 ♖a4 22 c5 dxc5!? 23 ♕c3 b6 24 ♕xe5 ♕xe5 25 ♗xe5 ♘xe4 26 fxe4

26 ♗xc7? loses to 26...♘c3.

26...♖xe4 27 ♗xc7 ♖xe2 28 ♗xb6 ♗f5 29 ♗xc5

Insufficient is 29 ♖xf5 gxf5, when Black should eventually be able to win White's d-pawn.

29...♖e8

After 29...♗e4 White would resist by 30 ♖fe1! ♗xg2+ 31 ♔g1.

30 ♖a1 ♗e4 31 ♗f2 ♗xd5 32 ♘d4 ♖b2 33 ♖ab1 ♖eb8 34 ♖xb2 ♖xb2 35 ♔g1?

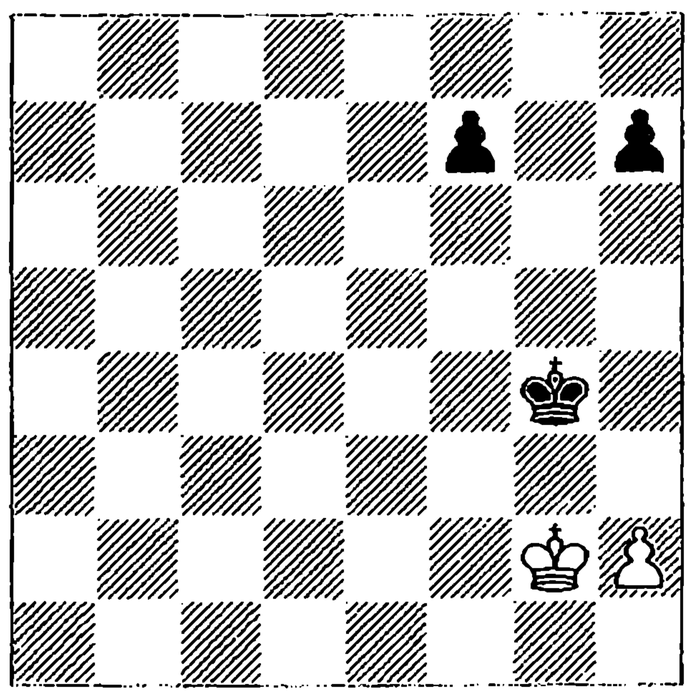
35 ♘f3! is necessary (with the idea 35...♗c4 36 ♗d4!). Then Black must still work hard to win the endgame.

35...♗e3 36 ♘f3 ♗xf3 37 gxf3 ♖xf2 38 ♖xf2 ♔g7 39 ♔g2 ♗xf2 40 ♔xf2 ♔f6 41 ♔g3 ♔f5 42 ♔g2 ♔f4 43 ♔f2 g5 44 ♔g2 g4!

Simplifying into a theoretically winning position.

45 fxg4 ♔xg4 *(D)*

W



Having his rook's pawn on its initial position, Black wins easily. But if Black, for example, had his pawns on h6 and f4, it would be a draw. In such a way I saved half a point in the aforementioned game versus Van Laatum.

46 ♔f2 ♔f4 47 ♔e2 f5 48 ♔f2 ♔e4 49 ♔e2 f4 50 ♔f2 f3 0-1

Game 7
Bogdanovski – Golubev
Skopje 1991

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 d6 3 c4 g6 4 ♘c3 ♗g7 5 e4 0-0 6 ♗e2 e5 7 0-0 ♘c6 8 d5 ♘e7 9 ♘d2 ♘e8

9...♘d7 10 b4 f5 usually comes to the same thing after 11 c5 ♘f6. If Black accepts the pawn sacrifice by 11...dxc5 12 bxc5 ♘xc5 then 13 ♗a3! gives White excellent compensation for the pawn and better chances.

10 b4! f5 11 c5 ♘f6

The alternative lines 11...♔h8 12 a4! and 11...a5 12 ♗a3! axb4 13 ♗xb4 are unattractive for Black.

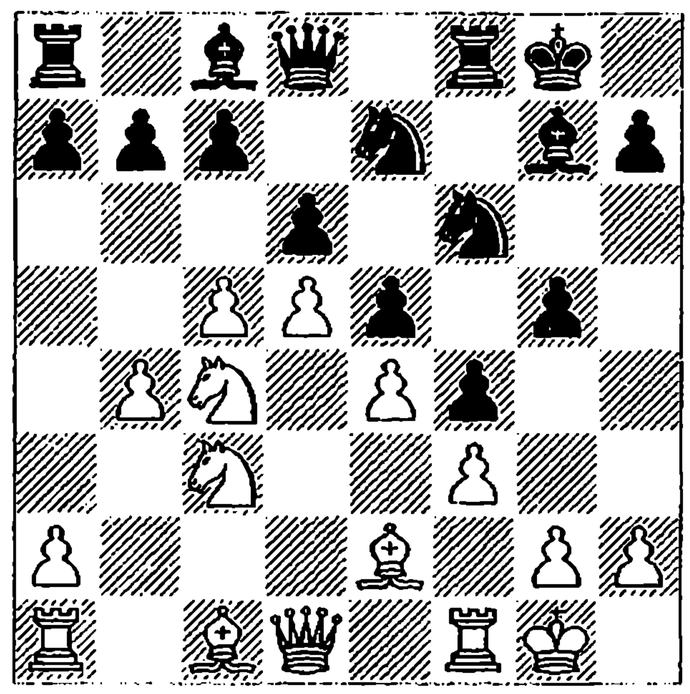
12 f3

12 ♗a3!? deserves attention: 12...♗h6 (after 12...fxe4 13 ♘cxe4 ♘xe4 14 ♘xe4 White has an edge) 13 f3 (13 ♗f3 ♗xd2!? 14 ♕xd2 f4 15 ♖ac1 g5 16 ♗e2 g4 with good counterchances, Ricardi-Roselli, Pinamar 2001) 13...♗e3+ 14 ♔h1 and Black should probably try 14...♗d4!? here because 14...f4 leads to a bad position by force: 15 ♘c4 ♗d4 16 cxd6 cxd6 17 ♘b5! ♗xa1 18 ♕xa1 ♘e8 19 ♘bxd6!! ♘xd6 20 ♕xe5 ♘f7 21 ♕c3 ♘f5 22 exf5 gxf5 23 ♗b2 ♕g5 24 ♖g1 ♖d8 25 g3 and White won easily in Browne-Maloney, USA 1997.

12...f4 13 ♘c4!

The possibility of exerting pressure against d6 by transferring the knight to c4 is the basic idea behind 9 ♘d2.

13...g5 *(D)*



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This sharp but, objectively speaking, risky position for Black very often arises in cases where he plays 9...♘e8 or 9...♘d7 after either 9 ♘d2 or 9 b4. I cannot recommend this line for Black with absolute confidence, but as a matter of fact I have played it twice, both times against strong opponents, and twice won.

14 ♗a3!?

White's principal choice is between this move and 14 a4 followed by 15 ♗a3 (see Game 8, Bunzmann-Golubev).

14...♘g6 15 b5 ♘e8 *(D)*

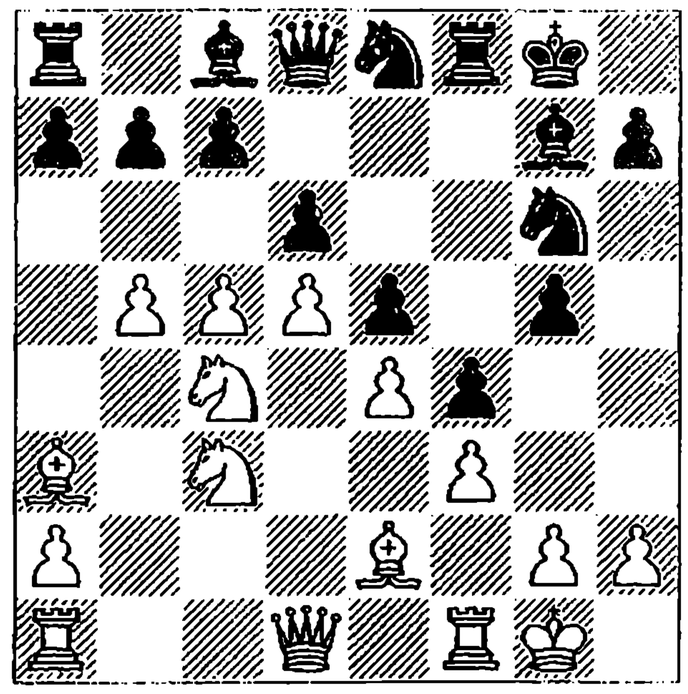
15...dxc5!? 16 ♗xc5 ♖f7 17 a4 h5 transposes to Bunzmann-Golubev.

16 b6!

The most principled: White creates chaos on the queenside, which is almost always a good idea for him.

16...axb6

After 16...cxb6 White has the following possibilities:



W

a) 17 ♘xd6?! bxc5! 18 ♘xe8 ♖xe8 19 ♗b5 (19 ♗xc5 ♕a5!) 19...♗d7 20 d6 b6! is unclear, Vaganian-Shirov, Manila IZ 1990.

b) After 17 cxb6 Black can transpose to the main game by 17...axb6, while 17...a6 18 ♖b1 with the idea ♘a5-c6-a7 is much better for White according to Shirov. His verdict was confirmed in K.Nikolaidis-Kordis, Athens 1999.

c) 17 cxd6!? ♗d7 18 ♕b3 h5 19 ♘b5 g4 20 ♘c7! ♘xc7 21 dxc7 ♕h4 22 fxg4 hxg4 23 g3!, with an advantage for White, occurred in Bogdanovski-Andonovski, Skopje open 1991. I also played in the Skopje open (which preceded the round-robin tournament), but was unfamiliar with this game until Bogdanovski told me about it after the end of our game!

17 cxb6 cxb6

Not strictly necessary, because there was no direct threat. However, after other moves Black would not have an easy life either, and here he may at least hope to push ...g4 while White is preparing ♘xb6.

18 ♕b3 h5 19 ♖ab1

White cannot take the pawn yet: 19 ♘xb6? ♖xa3 20 ♕xa3 ♕xb6+.

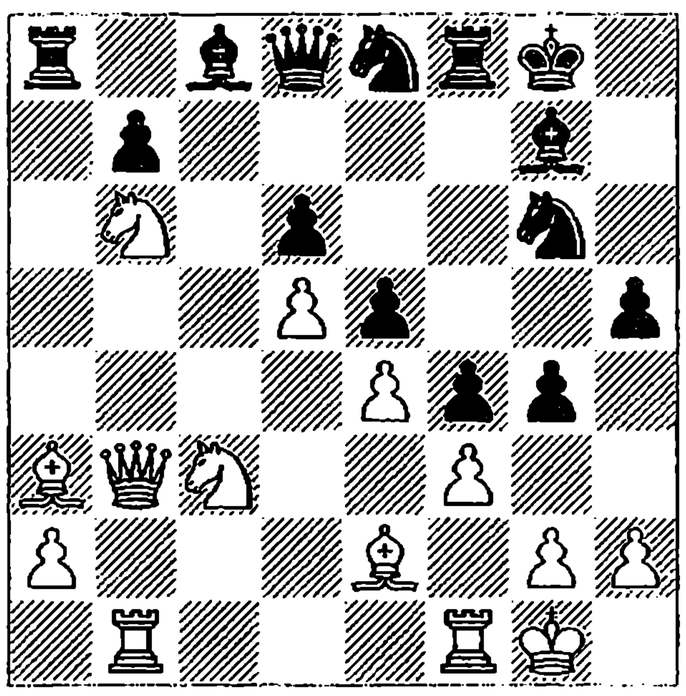
Curiously, 19 ♖fb1!? is of some interest because the absence of the rook from f1 can help White in lines where Black sacrifices material for the attack: 19...g4 20 ♘xb6 ♕g5 (20...♕h4 21 ♘xa8!? g3 22 ♕b6! ♕xh2+ 23 ♔f1; instead, Black should play 20...♖b8 with the idea 21 ♘xc8 ♖xc8 22 fxg4 ♕g5!) 21 ♘xa8 and here 21...g3? 22 h3 ♕h4 23 ♗f1! is simply losing for Black.

19...g4 20 ♘xb6! *(D)*

20...♕g5!?

Alexei Shirov's suggested improvement on the game Shirov-Akopian, Daugavpils 1989, which continued 20...♕h4 21 ♘xc8! (White

B



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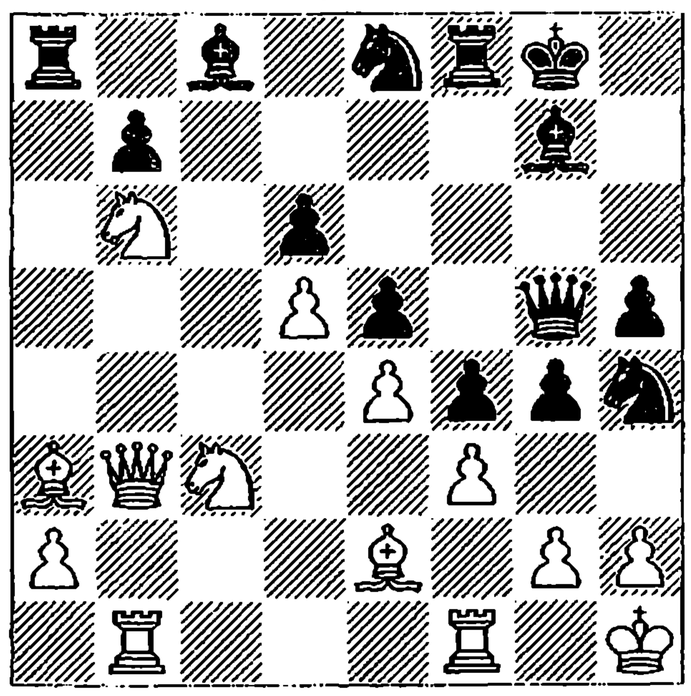


must urgently eliminate the bishop; if he does not, and plays 21 ♘xa8?, then 21...g3 22 h3 ♗xh3 23 gxh3 ♕xh3 24 ♖f2 ♘h4 is not really possible to meet) 21...♖xc8 22 ♘b5 with better chances for White.

The idea of 20...♕g5 is to win an important tempo: in case White plays ♘xc8, the queen is placed much more effectively on g5 than on h4. Unfortunately, 20...♕g5 allows White to consider capturing the rook, and, as we shall see, there is no guarantee that Black will have a strong enough attack in this case. Frankly speaking, I was only familiar with Shirov's notes but did not analyse the lines seriously before the game.

21 ♔h1

According to Shirov 21 ♘xa8?! g3! 22 h3 ♕h4 23 ♖b2 ♗xh3 24 gxh3 ♕xh3 25 ♗b5 ♘h4! is good for Black, and it seems that this nice line works.

But 21 fxg4!? looks like a possible way to put Black's 20th move under question. After 21...♖xa3 22 ♕xa3 ♗xg4 Black's compensation for the exchange is unclear. Instead Black can try the desperate 21...hxg4 22 ♘xa8 ♕h4!? and after 23 ♕c2 (23 ♘b6? g3) possibly 23...♖f6!? but I suspect that his activity is insufficient to compensate for a rook here. The immediate 23...g3 24 h3 ♗xh3 25 gxh3 ♕xh3 26 ♗f3 ♘h4 fails to 27 ♕e2!, when the threat of 28 ♗g4 denies Black time to play 27...♖f6. One more idea is 23...♗h6 but White can neutralize the bishop by 24 ♗c1!.

21...♘h4 *(D)*

21...g3 22 ♘xc8 ♖xc8 23 h3!? looks extremely good for White – Black is unlikely to find time to transfer the knight to g5 and create any threats.

22 ♘xc8?!

After 22 fxg4!? Black's choice is between 22...♗xg4 23 ♗xg4 ♕xg4 24 ♖f2 ♖a6, when material is balanced but he is strategically worse, and 22...hxg4 23 ♘xa8 g3, which might be dangerous for White, at least in practice.

22 ♘xa8!? g3 is one more crazy position with an extra rook for White and unclear (though highly dangerous) compensation for Black. 23 ♘b6 (or 23 ♕c4 ♘xg2!? 24 ♕xc8 ♕h4 25 h3 ♘e3 26 ♕e6+ ♔h7, when Black's main idea is 27...♖f6 28 ♕c8 ♖f5) 23...♘xg2 24 ♖g1 ♘h4 25 ♗f1 ♘xf3 26 ♘xc8 ♕h4! with the idea 27 h3 g2+ 28 ♗xg2 ♕g3 29 ♗xf3 ♕xh3# is one illustration of how challenging White's defensive task can be.

Less interesting is 22 ♖g1?! g3 with sufficient counterplay; then 23 h3? ♖xa3 24 ♕xa3 ♗xh3 is just bad for White.

22...♖xc8 23 ♖g1

White has avoided the main dangers by eliminating his main enemy (the c8-bishop), but does he have any advantage now? I don't believe so. Although Black cannot create quick mating threats without his light-squared bishop, he has nevertheless achieved enough on the kingside to keep White under pressure. Meanwhile, the queenside is like a desert now – White has practically nothing to attack there with the limited forces which he is able to involve.

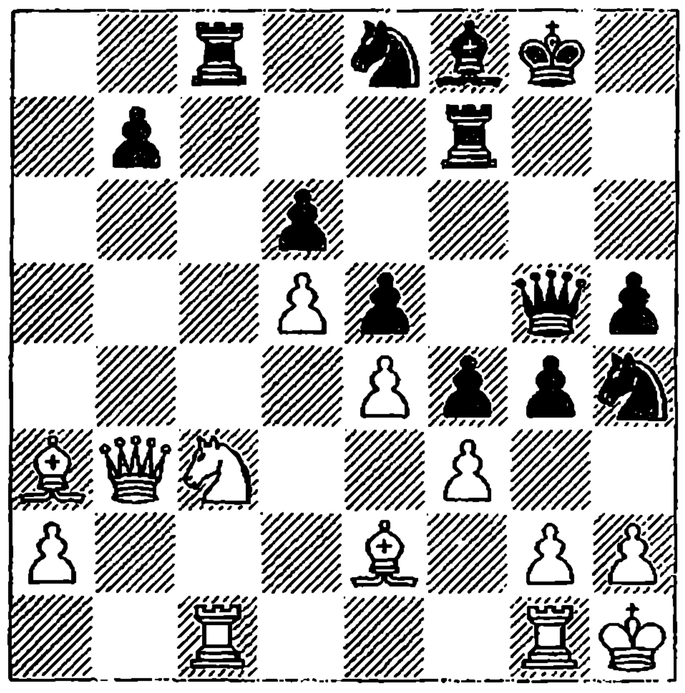
23...♖f7 24 ♖bc1

An interesting idea is 24 ♘b5 ♗f8 25 fxg4. Then Black should play not 25...hxg4, which allows White to win the g4-pawn by 26 g3!, but 25...♘f6! with strong counterplay.

24...♗f8! *(D)*

25 ♘a4

This position arose again in a more recent game, which was also won by Black: 25 ♘b5



♖xc1 26 ♗xc1 ♖g7 27 ♕d1 ♘f6 28 a4 ♕g6 29 ♕e1 g3 30 h3 ♘g4 31 fxg4 hxg4 32 ♗f1 gxh3 33 gxh3 f3 34 ♗e3 ♕xe4 35 ♗f2 g2+ 36 ♔h2 ♕f4+ 37 ♗g3 f2 38 ♕xf2 ♕xf2 0-1 Ma.Pavlov-Sviriov, Alushta 2004.

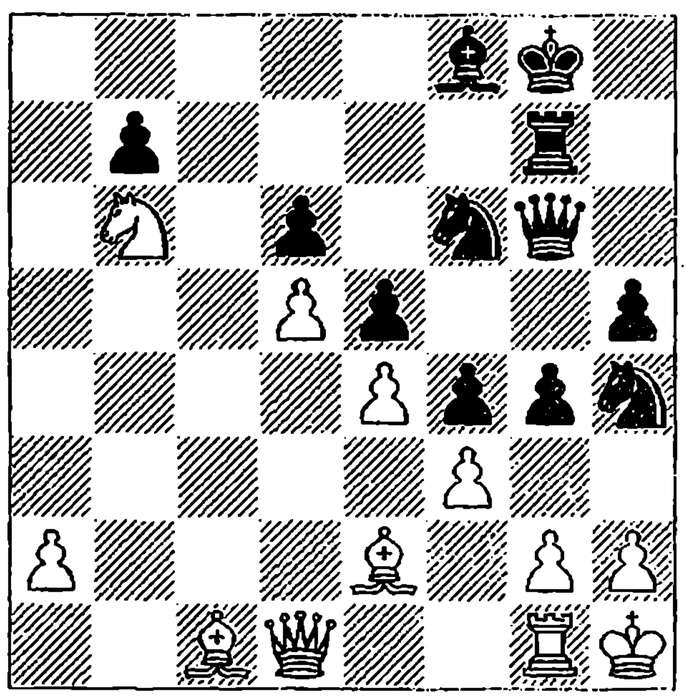
25...♖xc1 26 ♗xc1 ♖g7

White's actions over the last three moves have not been very successful. He exchanged a pair of rooks and uncoordinated his minor pieces. At the same time, Black has consolidated completely and soon his kingside pressure will oblige White to defend using almost all his forces. Perhaps Black is already slightly better.

27 ♕d1

The impatient 27 g3?! gxf3 28 ♗xf3 only makes things worse for White. After 28...♕g6 (28...b5!?) 29 ♕d3 ♘f6 30 ♘c3 ♘xf3 31 ♕xf3 h4!, the attempt 32 g4?! ♘xg4 33 h3 is nicely refuted by 33...♘h2!.

27...♘f6 28 ♘b6 ♕g6 *(D)*



29 ♗d2

After 29 ♕e1 Black plays 29...g3, hoping for 30 h3? ♘g4! 31 fxg4 hxg4 32 ♗xg4 ♕xg4!! 33 hxg4 ♖h7 34 ♖f1 ♘f3#.

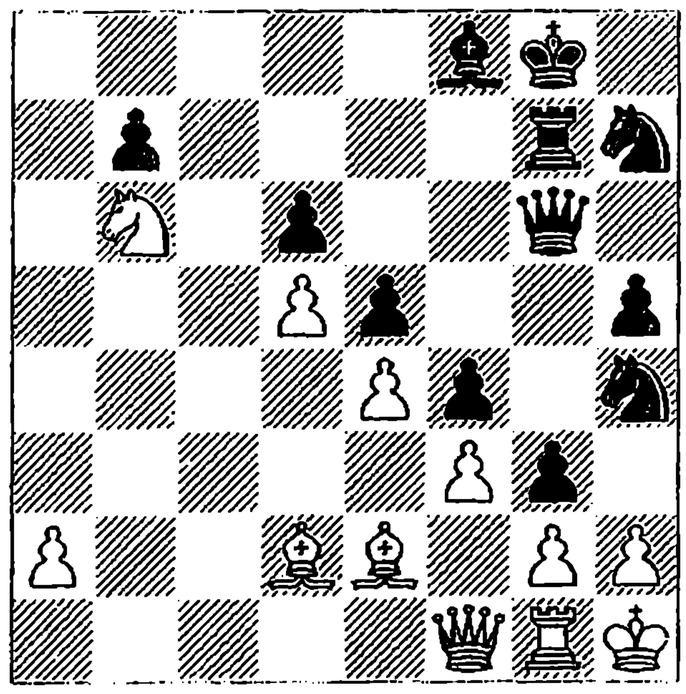
29...♘h7

The combination 29...gxf3 30 gxf3 ♘xe4 31 ♖xg6 ♘f2+ 32 ♔g1 ♘h3+ results in a draw.

30 ♕f1

An unnecessary move, but after 30 a4 Black could also play 30...g3 (30...♘g5? 31 ♗e1!) and after 31 h3 ♘g5 White must lock in his rook by 32 ♗f1 with rather an unpromising position for him.

30...g3 *(D)*



31 ♗e1

Preventing both ...♘g5 and ...gxh2 followed by ...♕g3+. Instead, 31 h3? loses to 31...♘g5 32 ♕e1 ♘xh3 33 gxh3 g2+ 34 ♔h2 ♕g3+ 35 ♕xg3 fxg3#.

31 hxg3!? is extremely risky but seems not to be too bad:

a) 31...♘f5 32 exf5 ♕f6 is met by 33 ♘d7!.

b) After 31...♕f6!? 32 gxf4 ♘f5 White must play 33 g4! ♕h4+ 34 ♔g2, acquiescing to a perpetual check after 34...♕g3+; Black may decline the draw and continue 34...hxg4 35 exf5! exf4! 36 ♗xf4 g3 37 ♖h1 ♕xf4, when he is slightly better.

c) 31...fxg3 32 ♕c1! (but not 32 ♗b5? ♘f5! 33 ♗d7, when Black wins by 33...♕f6! 34 ♗xf5 ♖g4!) 32...♘f5 33 ♕c8 ♘d4 leads to a very complex position.

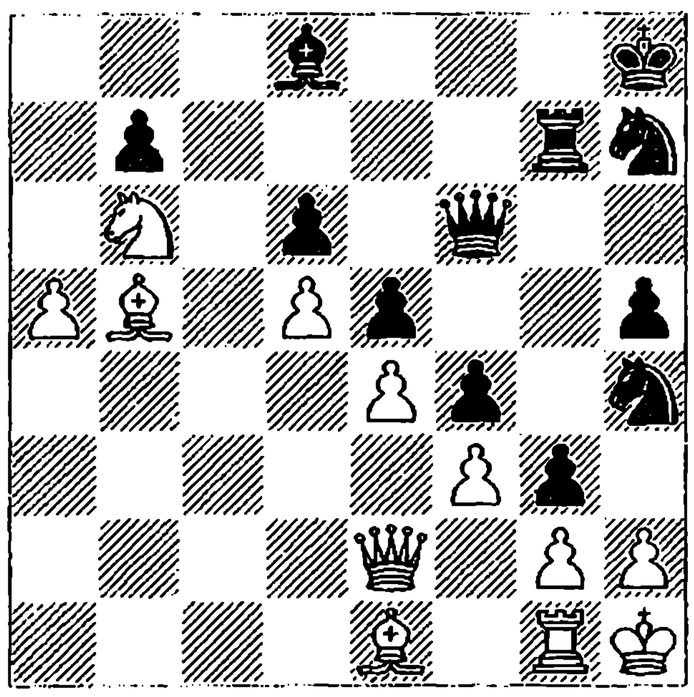
31...♖c7!?

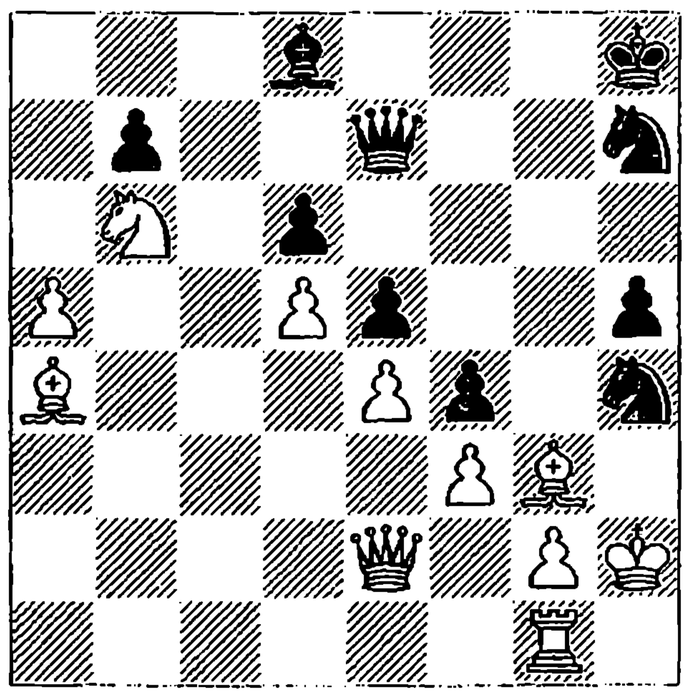
With the idea ...♖c1 or ...♖c2. 31...♗e7!? also deserves attention.

32 ♗c4 ♗e7! 33 a4

If White activates his queen by 33 ♕d3!? ♗d8 34 ♕a3 then Black has the very interesting reply 34...♘xf3!? 35 gxf3 (or 35 ♕xf3 ♖c5! 36 ♗b4 ♗xb6 37 ♗xc5 ♗xc5) 35...♖g7 36 hxg3 ♗xb6 37 ♖g2 fxg3 38 ♖xg3 ♕f6.

33...♗d8 34 a5 ♔h8 35 ♕e2 ♖g7 36 ♗b5 ♕f6! *(D)*





After lengthy manoeuvres, Black has arranged his forces optimally. The idea of capturing on h2 followed by ...♖g3 is now in the air, while 37 h3 is, as always, strongly met by 37...♘g5 (this move also gives Black an attack after 37 ♕c4).

37 ♗e8 gxh2 38 ♔xh2 ♕e7?!

A pity. Having (like my opponent) only a few minutes on the clock, I did not find the idea that was executed one move later: after 38...♖g3! White has nothing better than 39 ♖f1 ♖xg2+ 40 ♕xg2 ♘xg2 41 ♔xg2.

39 ♗a4?!

White misses a good chance to solve his problems: 39 ♗d7! ♗xb6 40 axb6 ♘xf3+ (not 40...♕xd7? 41 ♗xh4) 41 gxf3 (but not 41 ♕xf3? ♘g5!) 41...♖xg1 42 ♔xg1 ♕xd7 and, despite Black's extra pawn, a draw looks like the most probable result. With the current pawn-structure, even the pawn endgame is dead drawn!

Remarkably, 39 ♗xh5!?, which may look suicidal, is not that bad. 39...♖g3 (39...♕g5!? 40 ♗g4 ♕h6 41 ♗h3 ♘g5 42 ♗xh4 ♕xh4 with the initiative for the pawn) 40 ♗xg3! ♘f5! 41 ♗g4! fxg3+ 42 ♔h1 ♘d4 43 ♕c4 ♕h4+ 44 ♗h3 ♘g5 45 ♕c8 ♘de6! 46 dxe6!? (46 ♕xe6 ♘xe6 47 dxe6 ♗xb6 48 axb6 ♕g5!) 46...♘xh3 47 ♕xd8+! ♔g7! 48 ♕e7+! (48 ♕xh4 ♘f2#) 48...♕xe7 49 gxh3 ♕xe6 50 ♖xg3+ ♔f7 and Black preserves chances for a win.

39...♖g3!

Threatening 40...♘xf3+.

40 ♗xg3? *(D)*

After 40 ♔h1? ♘f5! 41 ♖f1 ♕h4+ 42 ♔g1 ♘g5! Black mates. The only possibility to resist was 40 ♖f1! ♖xg2+ (40...♕g5 41 ♖f2!; 40...♕g7?! 41 ♗xg3! fxg3+ 42 ♔g1) 41 ♕xg2 ♘xg2 42 ♔xg2 and Black's victory is not absolutely guaranteed.

40...♘f5!!

Not 40...fxg3+? 41 ♔xg3 ♘f5+ 42 ♔f2.

41 ♖c1

Otherwise: 41 exf5 fxg3+ 42 ♔xg3 ♕h4# or 41 ♗e1 ♘g3 42 ♗xg3 fxg3+ 43 ♔xg3 ♕h4#.

41...fxg3+ 42 ♔g1 ♕h4 43 ♕b5 ♕h2+

43...♘d4 44 ♕e8+ ♔g7 45 ♕d7+ ♔h6 46 ♕h3 ♘e2+ also wins.

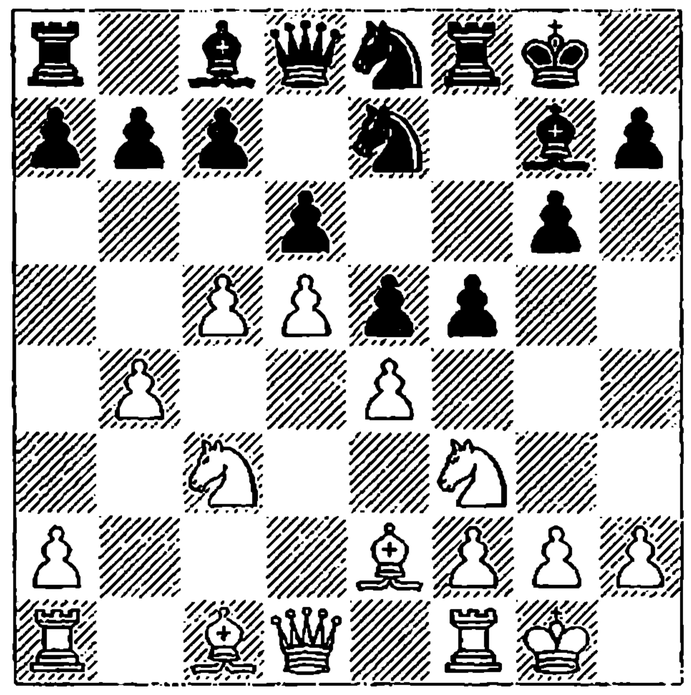
44 ♔f1 ♕h1+ 45 ♔e2 ♕xg2+ 0-1

After 46 ♔d3 ♕xf3+ 47 ♔c4 ♕xe4+ 48 ♔c3 the simplest is 48...♘f6!.

This game won a beauty prize in the tournament – two hundred German Marks as I remember.

Game 8
Bunzmann – Golubev
Bethune open 2002

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 5 ♘f3 0-0 6 ♗e2 e5 7 0-0 ♘c6 8 d5 ♘e7 9 b4 ♘e8 10 c5 f5 *(D)*



11 ♘d2

White is not obliged to transpose to 9 ♘d2 lines. An interesting alternative is 11 ♘g5!?.

Black can follow the path of Bareev-Gabriel, Bundesliga 2001/2: 11...h6 12 ♘e6 ♗xe6 13 dxe6 fxe4 14 cxd6 ♘xd6 15 b5 ♔h7 16 ♗a3 ♘e5 17 ♖c1 ♖c8 18 ♗g4 ♖e8 19 ♗xd6 cxd6 20 ♘d5 (20 ♕d5 h5!?) 20...♖xc1 21 ♕xc1 ♖xe6 22 ♕a3 ♕g5 23 ♗h3 ♕d2 24 ♘c3 ♘xe3 ½-½.

11...♘f6 12 f3 f4 13 a4

13 ♘c4 g5 14 a4 transposes.

13...g5 14 ♘c4 ♘g6 15 ♗a3 ♖f7

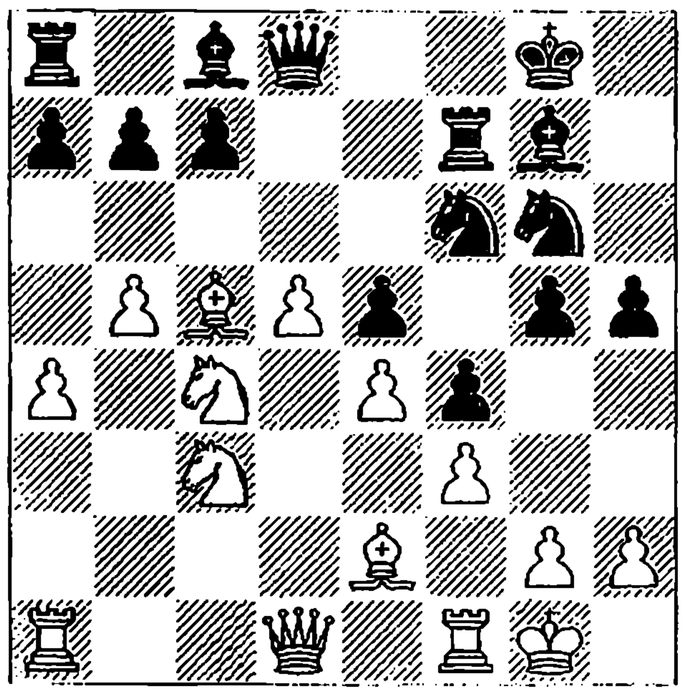
After 15...h5 16 b5 ♘e8?! (16...dxc5 17 ♗xc5 ♖f7) White leaves his queen on d1 (where it prevents Black from playing ...g4) and continues 17 a5! with a serious advantage. 17...b6?! is refuted by 18 cxb6 cxb6 19 axb6 axb6 20 ♘a4! ♖b8 21 ♗b4! ♖f7 22 ♘cxb6! ♖xb6 23 ♗a5 ♖fb7 24 ♖c1 ♗d7 25 ♖c6! ♗xc6 26 dxc6 and White is winning, Bonin-Penkalski, Baltimore 1993.

16 b5 dxc5!?

An interesting, non-standard idea, first used by John van der Wiel. After 16...♗f8 White develops the initiative by 17 a5 or 17 b6. In both cases Black's results have been rather discouraging so far.

17 ♗xc5 h5 *(D)*

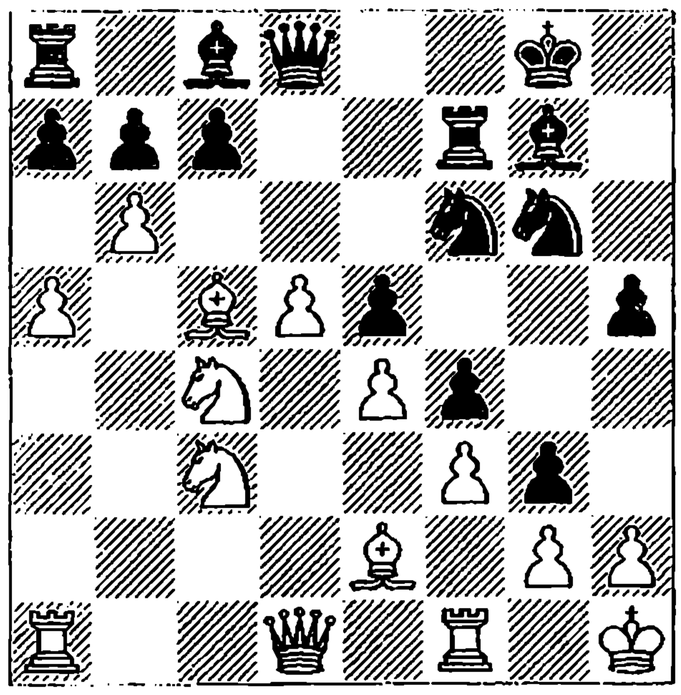
W



18 d6!?

This move creates a very tense situation in the centre, but Black is not badly prepared for this turn of events. Hitherto, the puzzling line 18 a5 g4 19 b6 g3 20 ♔h1! *(D)* has attracted more attention. White's strategic advantage on the queenside is colossal, so Black must try to create serious threats on the kingside very quickly. White can easily defend the h2-pawn, so Black's main target must be the g2-pawn which, in theory, can at some point be attacked by bishop (...♗h3), knight (...♘h4), pawn (...h4-h3) or queen (...♕g5). I shall provide a brief overview of the possibilities:

B



a) The immediate 20...h4? is clearly wrong because after 21 h3! Black has nothing.

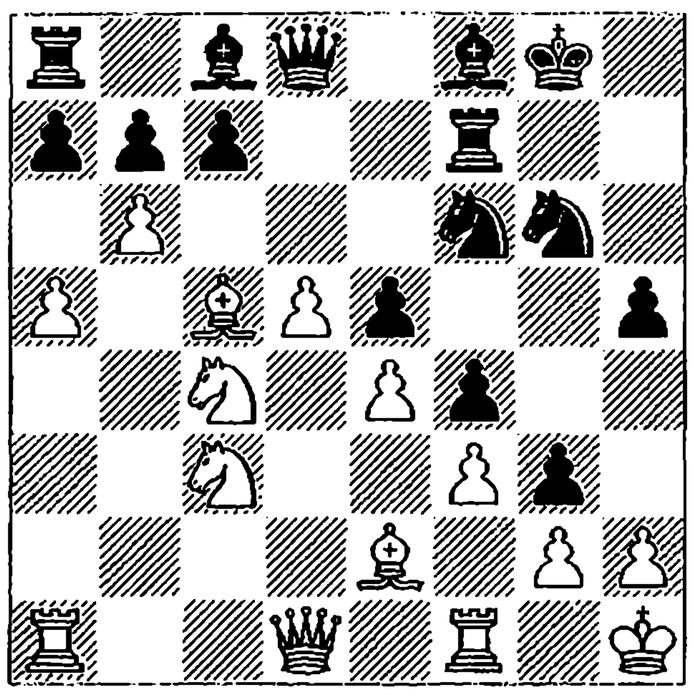
b) 20...axb6?! 21 axb6 ♖xa1 22 ♕xa1 ♘g4? (22...♘h7!? is better, but it is hard to trust Black's chances after, e.g., 23 ♕a8!? ♗f8 24 ♗g1) 23 fxg4 ♕h4 24 ♗g1 hxg4 25 ♕a8! f3 26 ♕xc8+ ♔h7 27 ♗xf3! and White won easily in Tratar-Roselli, Bled OL 2002.

c) 20...♘e8 21 ♘b5?! (21 d6!? is a possible improvement, with the idea 21...axb6 22 dxc7 ♕xd1 23 ♖fxd1 bxc5 24 ♘b6 ♘xc7 25 ♗c4 ♗f6 26 ♘xa8 ♘xa8 27 ♘b5; I should also mention Khalifman's proposal 21 ♖e1!?, preparing h3 and ♗f1) 21...♗f8! with sufficient counterchances for Black after 22 ♗g1 (or 22 d6 axb6 23 axb6 ♖xa1 24 ♕xa1 cxd6, Kachaev-Weeks, ICCF e-mail 2001) 22...♕g5!, Siegel-Maiwald, Bundesliga 1998/9.

d) 20...♘h7 21 d6 (here too, 21 ♖e1 deserves attention, as in Watanabe-Roselli, Istanbul OL 2000, or maybe 21 ♘b5 ♕h4 22 ♗g1 ♗h3 23 gxh3 ♕xh3 24 ♖f2 gxf2 25 ♗xf2 axb6 26 ♘xc7!? ♖xc7 27 ♘xb6 with the threat of 28 ♗f1) 21...♕h4 (not 21...axb6? 22 dxc7!) 22 ♗g1 ♗h3 and now White should play 23 gxh3! (23 bxc7?? allows Black to execute his main idea: 23...♗xg2+ 24 ♔xg2 ♕h3+!! 25 ♔xh3 ♘g5+ 26 ♔g2 ♘h4+ and White resigned in Ftačnik-Cvitan, Bundesliga 1997/8 in view of 27 ♔h1 g2#; 23 ♖e1?? does not help either: 23...♗xg2+! 24 ♔xg2 ♕h3+ 25 ♔xh3 ♘g5+ 26 ♔g2 ♘h4+ 27 ♔f1 g2+ 28 ♔f2 ♘h3#) 23...♕xh3 24 ♖f2 gxf2 25 ♗xf2 with better chances for White, accordingly to the quite convincing analysis by Khalifman.

e) I shall suggest 20...♗f8!? *(D)*:

W



e1) 21 ♘a4? is clearly wrong in view of 21...♘xe4!? 22 fxe4 ♗xc5.

e2) 21 ♗xf8? ♘xe4! followed by 22...♕h4 gives Black a winning attack.

e3) After 21 bxc7 ♖xc7 22 ♗g1, 22...♗h3!? is probably stronger than 22...♗c5 23 d6 ♖c6.

e4) 21 d6!? axb6! 22 ♗g1 bxa5 is unclear.

e5) 21 ♗g1 and here maybe 21...axb6!? (21...♘h7 gives Black an attack after 22 d6 ♕g5 23 dxc7 h4 24 ♕d8 ♘f6! but White's play can certainly be improved) 22 axb6 ♖xa1 23 ♕xa1 h4!? 24 h3 (24 bxc7 h3! with the idea 25 cxd8♕? hxg2+ 26 ♔xg2 ♘h4+ 27 ♔h1 g2#) 24...♗xh3 25 gxh3 ♕c8 26 ♔g2 ♘h7 (threatening 27...♘g5, so White must return a bishop or a knight now) 27 ♘xe5!? ♘xe5 28 ♗d4 ♘g5 29 ♖h1 ♘g4!? 30 fxg4 (alternatively, 30 hxg4 h3+ and now 31 ♔g1 cxb6 or 31 ♖xh3 ♘xh3 32 ♔xh3 ♖h7+ 33 ♔g2 ♖h2+ 34 ♔g1 ♕d8 35 d6 ♗g7! 36 ♕a2+ ♔f8) 30...f3+ 31 ♗xf3 ♘xf3 32 ♗e3 ♘h2! (32...♘e5 leads to a difficult position for Black after 33 ♖f1 ♖xf1 34 ♕xf1 cxb6 35 ♗d4 ♗g7 36 ♕f5! and if 36...♕xf5 then 37 exf5!) 33 e5 and Black will probably be able to maintain the balance in the complications after 33...♗g7 or 33...cxb6.

Certainly, more research would bring more ideas for both sides.

18...♗f8

The alternative is 18...♗e6, when 19 ♘d5!? deserves attention.

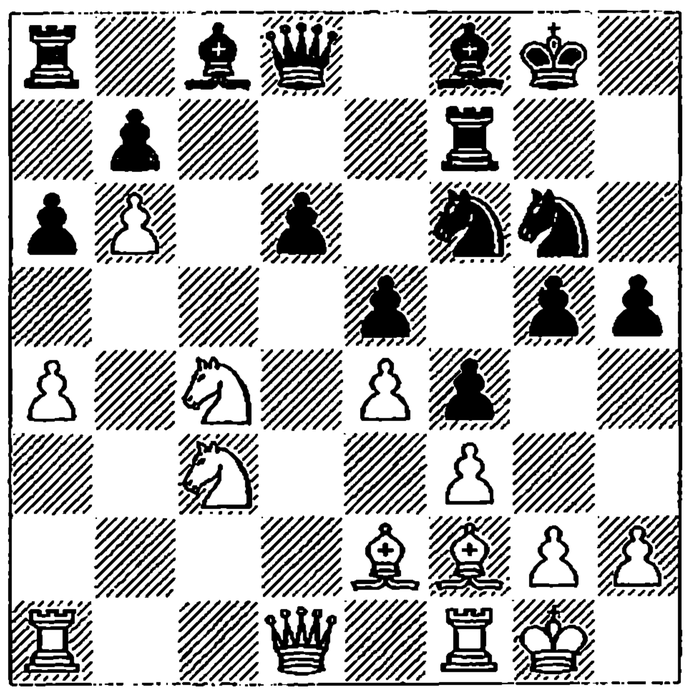
19 ♗f2

There are plenty of other ideas for White, the most interesting of them being 19 b6!? cxb6 (19...axb6?! 20 ♗f2) 20 ♗f2 with complex play.

19...cxd6 20 b6 a6 *(D)*

Black has obtained an extra pawn, but White has strategic compensation and may hope to make use of the d-file, the d5-square and the a2-g8 diagonal, while his b6-pawn is potentially very dangerous. Black would probably not object to adding a white pawn on d5 in this position!

W



21 ♘d5

After 21 ♘a5 Black can play 21...♖g7!? 22 ♘d5 ♘xd5 23 ♕xd5+ ♔h8, planning ...g4 and hoping for 24 g4? fxg3 25 hxg3 ♘f4! 26 gxf4 gxf4+ 27 ♔h1 ♕d7.

21...♘xd5 22 ♕xd5 ♕f6 23 ♖ac1

The knight has no prospects on c4, and it is better to improve its position immediately: 23 ♘a5 (threatening 24 ♗c4) and if 23...♗e6 then 24 ♕d1!? (preventing ...g4) or 24 ♕d2 g4 25 ♗c4 ♗xc4 26 ♘xc4 gxf3 27 gxf3 ♕e6 28 ♕d3 with chances for both sides.

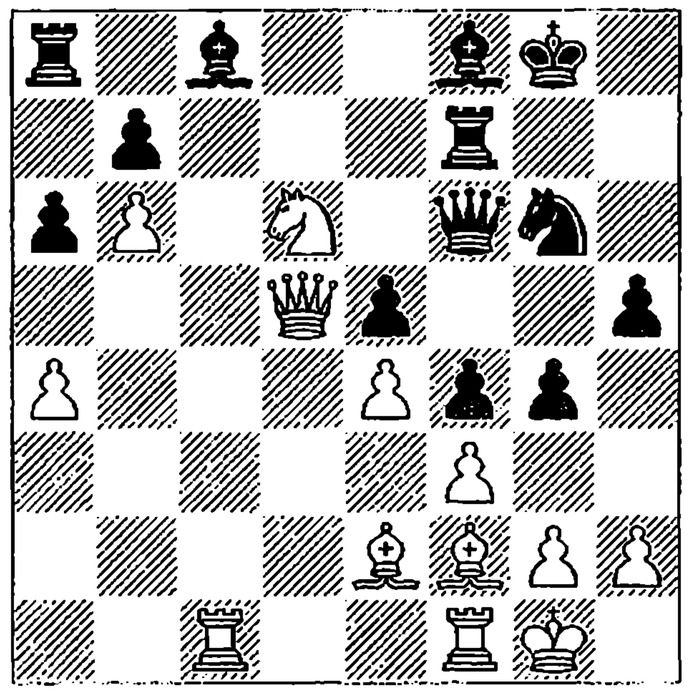
23...g4

23...♗e6 24 ♕d1 ♖d8, preparing ...d5, is also possible.

24 ♘xd6?! *(D)*

An over-optimistic, and not entirely correct blow. But otherwise Black could develop his initiative on the kingside by 24...g3.

B



24...♗e6!?

I was afraid to grab the knight, leaving my queenside undeveloped, and chose a line where

Black removes the b6-pawn from the board. 24...♕xd6? gives White good compensation after 25 ♗c4 ♕xd5 26 ♗xd5. However, the variations after 24...♗xd6!? 25 ♖fd1 (or 25 ♗c4 ♘e7 26 ♕xf7+ ♕xf7 27 ♗xf7+ ♔xf7 28 ♖fd1 ♔e6!) 25...♗a3! (attacking a rook) 26 ♖c7 (otherwise 26...♗e6!) and now 26...g3 or 26...♔g7 is likely to favour Black.

25 ♕xe6

The queen sacrifice is forced, because otherwise White loses a knight without any compensation; for example, 25 ♕c5? ♖d7 26 ♖fd1 ♖ad8.

25...♕xe6 26 ♘xf7 g3!

Not 26...♖c8? 27 ♘g5 ♕d7 28 ♗c4+ ♖xc4 29 ♖xc4 ♗e7 30 ♖c7! and White wins the b7-pawn.

27 hxg3 fxg3 28 ♗xg3

28 ♗e3? is refuted by 28...♕b3!.

28...♖c8! 29 ♘g5 ♕xb6+ 30 ♗f2 ♗c5! *(D)*

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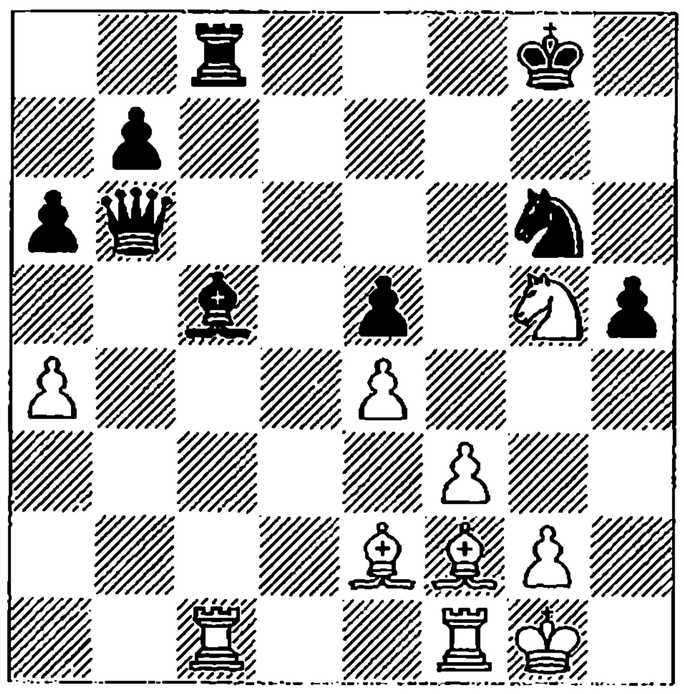


Black's chances are somewhat better, but one would expect there to be a tough fight ahead. However, White now opted for a forced line that did not work well.

31 ♖xc5

The alternative was 31 ♔h2 ♘f4 32 ♗c4+ ♔h8!?.

31...♖xc5 32 ♗c4+?!

32 ♖d1!? should have been preferred.

32...♔h8 33 ♖d1

After 33 ♘e6 Black has 33...♕b4! 34 ♘xc5 ♕xc4.

33...♕a5!

This move parries all White's threats.

34 ♗f7

Or: 34 ♖d8+ ♕xd8 35 ♘f7+ ♔g7 36 ♘xd8 ♖xc4; 34 ♗b3 ♖c3!.

34...♘f4! 35 g3?!

In time-trouble, White overlooks the crucial exchange of rooks. However, Black already had a decisive advantage.

35...♖c1! 36 ♖xc1 ♘e2+ 37 ♔f1 ♘xc1 38 ♗e3 ♕xa4 39 ♔g2 ♕c2+ 40 ♔h3 ♕d3 0-1

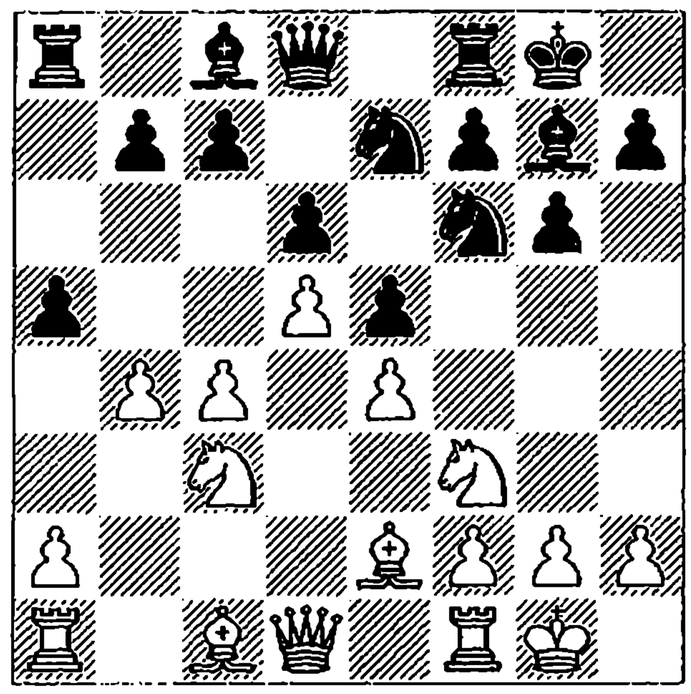
Game 9

R. Janssen – Golubev

Dieren 1999

1 ♘f3 d6 2 d4 ♘f6 3 c4 g6 4 ♘c3 ♗g7 5 e4 0-0 6 ♗e2 e5 7 0-0 ♘c6 8 d5 ♘e7 9 b4 a5 *(D)*

W



This move breaks up White's queenside pawns, because 10 a3?? does not really defend the pawn, and closing the queenside by 10 b5? results in a structure that favours Black, who will use the c5-square for his knight, while c6 is unavailable for White.

The ...a5 advance is a very natural method for Black to fight against the early b4 but it does not always work very well. White's dark-squared bishop is able to attack the squares c5 and a5, which are very sensitive in the structure which arises after ...a5 and bxa5 and, therefore, ...a5 as a rule does not allow Black to stop White's queenside initiative once and for all. The truth is that ...a5 can rarely be considered a serious mistake (unless White is able to defend the b4-pawn by a3!) but in many cases it is not the best idea either.

10 ♗a3!

This move is the reason why 9...a5 is significantly less popular than the main continuation 9...♘h5. White begins his play first.

10...axb4

10...b6 11 bxa5 ♖xa5 12 ♗b4 ♖a8 leads to the same position (albeit with one move more

played). Black has also tried 10...♘h5 11 c5! ♘f4, when 12 b5! has proved to be very promising for White.

11 ♗xb4 b6

Here Black's alternative is 11...♘d7 12 a4 ♗h6 (if 12...f5, 13 ♘g5!) 13 a5 f5, when 14 ♗d3 ♘f6 15 c5 leads to a slightly better position for White, and 14 ♘d2 ♘f6 15 c5 ♗xd2 16 ♕xd2 fxe4 17 cxd6 cxd6 18 ♘b5 ♘f5 19 ♖a3, sacrificing a pawn for the initiative, is a more principled road.

12 a4 *(D)*

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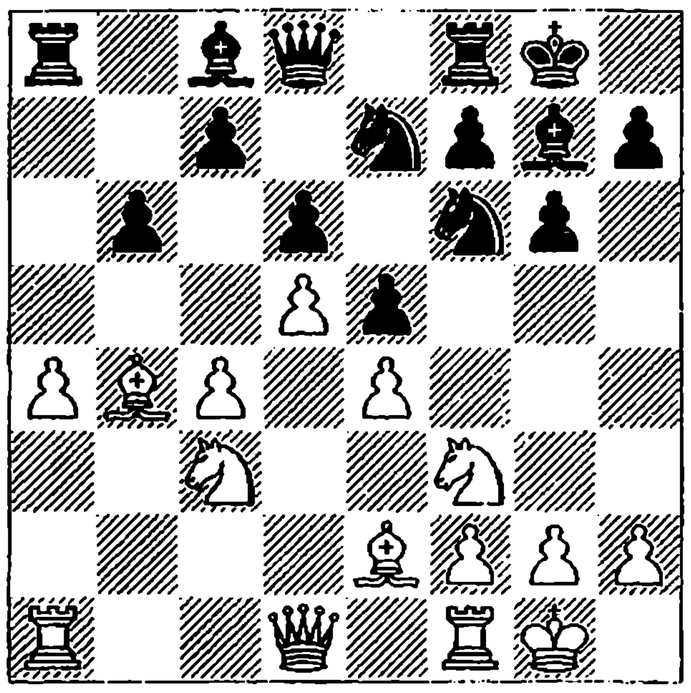

12...♖e8!?

I first witnessed the Latvian grandmaster Zigurds Lanka introducing this interesting move at the Chemnitz open in 1998, and have later used it several times myself.

Generally speaking, Black almost never has a reason to play ...♖e8 in closed KI positions. An opposite example comes to mind – if White closes the centre by d5 in lines with early ...♘bd7 and ...♖e8, then Black can be happy to move the rook from e8 to f8 in order to prepare ...f5. But in our case Lanka's move supports ...c5 (as an answer to 13 a5), which cannot work without preparation, because after dxc6 and ♗xd6 Black's f8-rook is attacked by the bishop. As we shall see, Black is ready to continue preparation of ...c5 by other atypical moves such as ...♗f8 or ...♗b7. Lanka's variation is not an easy nut to crack, but gradually I have become a bit sceptical about the whole line with its overly defensive concept.

Black has also tried 12...♘c8, when 13 ♘b5 f5 14 ♘d2 c6 15 dxc6 ♘xc6 16 ♕b3 ♘xb4 17 ♕xb4 (Rahman-Shirov, Manila OL 1992) gives White a comfortable edge.

13 ♘e1

Not bad, but hardly the most dangerous move for Black. The alternatives are:

a) 13 a5 allows Black to execute his main idea: 13...c5! 14 dxc6 ♘xc6 15 ♗xd6 ♘d4!? 16 ♘xd4 (16 ♗xe5?! ♘xf3+!? 17 ♗xf3 ♕xd1 18 ♖fxd1 ♖xe5 19 axb6 ♖xa1 20 ♖xa1 ♘d7!) 16...exd4 17 ♘b5 ♘xe4 18 ♗c7 ♕h4 gave him good counterplay in a couple of games.

b) 13 ♘d2 c5! (Lomineishvili-Lanka, Chemnitz open 1998) 14 dxc6!? ♘xc6 15 ♗a3 ♘d4 16 ♘b5 leads to an equal position.

c) 13 ♖e1 (preparing to defend the e4-pawn after ♗f1, and then the knight will be free to go to b5 at any moment) 13...♗f8 *(D)* (supporting the ...c5 idea), and now:

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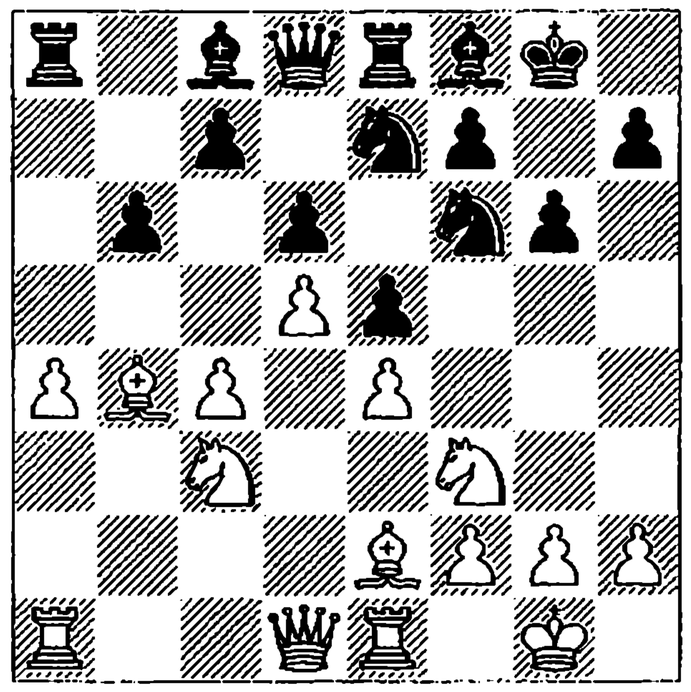

c1) 14 ♗f1 (with the positional threat of 15 ♘b5! followed by 16 a5) 14...c5! 15 dxc6 ♘xc6 16 ♗a3 ♗g4 17 h3 ♗xf3 18 ♕xf3 ♘d4 19 ♕d1 ♘d7 20 ♖b1 ♘c5 21 ♗c1 ♗g7 and Black equalized in Van Wely-Golubev, Dieren 1999 (played before our main game). I nevertheless lost the game after 22 g3 ♖a6 (22...♕d7!?) 23 h4 ♕d7 24 ♗e3 ♘xa4?! 25 ♗xd4 exd4 26 ♘xa4 ♕xa4 27 ♕xa4 ♖xa4 28 ♖xb6 ♖d8 29 ♖eb1 ♖a3 (29...d3!?) 30 ♖1b5 h6? (30...h5) 31 ♖d5 ♖e8 32 ♖dxd6 ♖xe4 33 ♖d8+ ♔h7 34 ♖b7 ♖f3 35 ♔g2 ♖f6 36 h5!.

c2) 14 h3 ♗b7!? 15 ♗f1 c5 16 dxc6 (stronger than 16 ♗a3, which was played by Kasimdzhanov and Van Wely against Ye Jiangchuan) 16...♘xc6 17 ♗a3 ♘d4 18 ♖a2! (18 ♘xd4?! exd4 19 ♕xd4 ♗g7) with some pressure for White, Epishin-Cherniaev, Geneva open 2002.

d) 13 ♕d3!? ♘d7 (13...♗f8?! is met by 14 ♘b5! followed by a5, but 13...♘h5 is interesting: 14 g3 f5 15 ♘d2 ♘f6, planning to meet 16 a5?!, as in Veingold-Rodriguez Gonzalez, Erandio open 2003, by 16...c5! 17 dxc6 ♘xc6 18

♗xd6 ♘d4!) 14 ♕b1! (an impressive improvement upon 14 a5 c5 15 dxc6 ♘xc6 16 ♗xd6 ♖xa5 17 ♖xa5 ♘xa5 18 ♘b5 ♘b7!? 19 ♖d1 ♕f6 with an acceptable position for Black, Bromberger-Golubev, Bad Wiessee open 1999). The second consecutive move by the queen ensures that White will achieve the a5 advance. Ivanchuk-Ye Jiangchuan, Moscow FIDE KO 2001 continued 14...♗h6 (14...♘c5 15 a5) 15 a5 ♘c5 16 axb6 ♖xa1 17 ♕xa1 cxb6 18 ♖b1 and here Black should have played 18...f5 19 ♗xc5 bxc5, when he is somewhat worse, but may hope to hold.

13...♗b7 14 ♘c2 *(D)*

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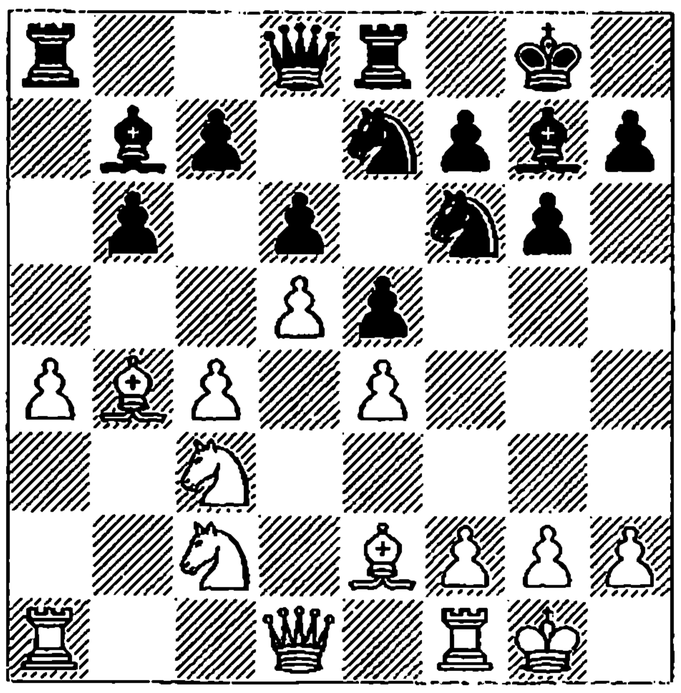

14...c5

14...♘d7!? is also possible.

15 ♗a3?!

15 dxc6 seems to be better founded positionally. Still, following 15...♘xc6 16 ♗a3!? ♘d4 White's pieces are coordinated a little worse in comparison with Epishin-Cherniaev (note 'c2' to White's 13th move). Black should have sufficient counterplay after, for example, 17 f3 ♘h5!?.

15...♖f8 16 ♗b2 ♗c8

Black has returned their pieces to their normal locations and will now start to prepare ...f5. White's knight is a bit misplaced on c2.

17 ♖a3 ♗d7 18 ♕d3 ♘e8 19 ♘b5 f5 20 f3 g5 21 ♗c3 ♘g6 22 ♕d2 fxe4!?

Trying to pose concrete problems for White. Objectively, it was not necessary to hurry.

23 fxe4 ♘f6 24 ♕e3?!

This allows Black to intensify his pressure. 24 ♘xd6? would lead to material losses after 24...♗xa4, but 24 ♕xg5!? ♘xe4 25 ♕xd8 ♖axd8 26 ♖xf8+ ♖xf8 27 ♗e1 was probably playable for White.

24...♘f4 25 ♗d1

Not 25 ♘xd6? due to 25...♘xe2+ 26 ♕xe2 ♗g4!.

25...♕e7 26 ♘e1 ♖f7 27 a5 bxa5 28 ♖xa5?

A fatal error. After 28 ♗xa5 Black could develop the initiative in various ways but at least the line 28...♖af8 29 ♘f3 g4 30 ♘d2 ♗h6 31 ♕e1 is not winning for him because ...♘d3 is not possible.

28...♖af8 *(D)*

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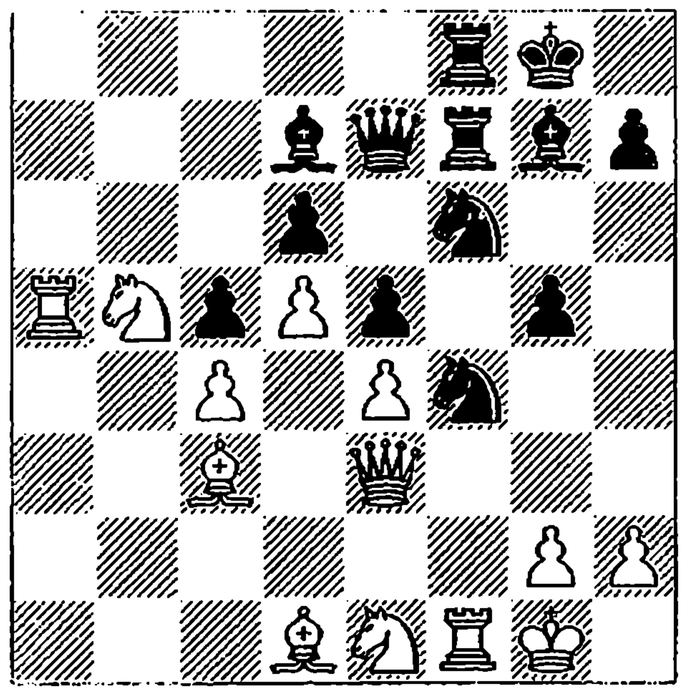

Now White's position collapses quickly.

29 ♘f3

Or 29 ♖f2 ♗xb5 30 ♖xb5 g4 followed by 31...♗h6.

29...g4! 30 ♘d2

Protecting the f1-rook.

30...♗h6! 31 ♕e1 ♘d3! 32 ♕e2 ♘c1

32...♘xe4! is equally good.

33 ♕e1 ♘xe4! 34 ♘f3

In time-trouble White noticed that he is losing after 34 ♖xf7 ♕xf7 35 ♕xe4 (or 35 ♘xe4 ♗e3+ 36 ♕xe3 ♕f1#) 35...♕f2+ 36 ♔h1 ♕f1+ 37 ♘xf1 ♖xf1#, but giving away a piece obviously cannot help.

34...gxf3 35 ♕xe4 ♘e2+ 36 ♔h1 ♖f4 0-1

Game 10

Van Wely – Golubev

Romanian Superliga (Sovata) 2000

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 5 ♘f3 0-0 6 ♗e2 e5 7 0-0 ♘c6 8 d5 ♘e7 9 b4 ♘h5 *(D)*

The most principled answer.

10 g3

Four decades ago this natural move, which prevents ...♘f4, was almost invariably used in grandmaster games. Nowadays, by contrast, 10

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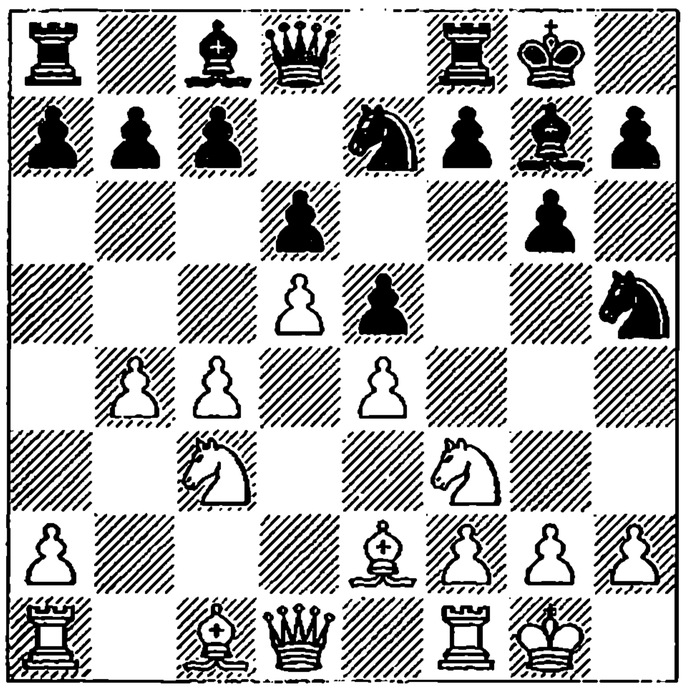


♖e1 is White's main move, and will be examined in Games 11 and 12.

Here I should mention one more alternative, 10 c5!?. Then:

a) 10...♘f4 (the most popular) 11 ♗xf4 exf4 and now:

a1) 12 ♖c1 is White's usual choice. Black should answer with 12...h6, preparing ...g5, or with 12...a5, when 13 cxd6 cxd6 14 ♘b5 ♗g4! gave him good play in Kamsky-Kasparov, New York PCA rpd 1994. Instead, in Djurhuus-Golubev, Biel open 1993, Black unsuccessfully experimented with 12...a6?! (unnecessarily defending the b5-square) 13 ♕d2! f5 14 cxd6!? ♕xd6 (it is better to seek compensation for the pawn after 14...cxd6 15 ♕xf4 fxe4 16 ♕xe4 and now 16...♗h6 or 16...a5) 15 ♖fe1 ♗xc3 (15...♕xb4 16 e5! with a strong initiative) 16 ♕xc3 fxe4 17 ♘g5 ♘xd5 18 ♗c4 c6 (18...♗e6 19 ♕d2! ♖ad8? 20 ♘xe4 ♕b6 21 ♘g5) 19 ♘xe4 ♕d8 20 ♕e5!? (threatening 21 ♘d6!) 20...♖f5 21 ♕d6 ♕f8 22 ♗xd5+ cxd5 23 ♕xf8+ ♖xf8 24 ♘d6 ♖d8 25 ♖c7! with an unpleasant endgame for Black, who managed to save half a point after long suffering.

a2) 12 ♕b3!? is interesting, preparing a further pawn sacrifice. 12...h6 (12...♗g4!? 13 ♖ad1 ♗xf3 14 ♗xf3 g5 as in Shneider-Gufeld, Helsinki open 1992 is playable but probably slightly worse for Black) 13 ♖ad1 g5 (planning 14...♘g6) 14 e5!? and then:

a21) After 14...♘f5 the principled continuation 15 e6! g4 16 ♗d3 gxf3 17 ♗xf5 ♕f6 18 ♘b5 ♕xf5 19 ♘xc7 seems to be advantageous for White.

a22) 14...g4!? is more interesting: 15 exd6 cxd6 16 ♘d4 and now the untested 16...♘f5! 17 ♘xf5 ♗xf5 18 ♘b5 ♗e5 followed by 19...f3 was suggested by Nunn.

a23) 14...dxe5 15 d6 ♘f5 (if 15...cxd6 16 ♖xd6 ♕e8 as in Nayer-Kotsur, Russian Cup (Elista) 2000, then 17 ♘b5!? ♗e6 18 ♖xe6 fxe6 19 ♘c7 ♕g6 20 ♘xe6 ♔h8 21 ♘xf8 ♖xf8 22 ♗d3! deserves attention, when 22...e4 23 ♗xe4 ♕xe4 24 ♖e1 wins a pawn for White) 16 h3! (16 dxc7 ♕xc7 may result in a repetition of moves after 17 ♘d5 ♕b8 18 ♗d3 ♖e8 19 ♗b5 ♖f8 20 ♗d3) 16...cxd6 (perhaps Black can consider 16...c6!?, which allows White a strong passed pawn, but at the same time restricts the possibilities of the white knights) 17 ♘e4 d5 18 ♖xd5 ♕e7 19 ♗c4 ♗d7 20 ♖d2 with good compensation for White, Skembris-David, Cannes open 1991.

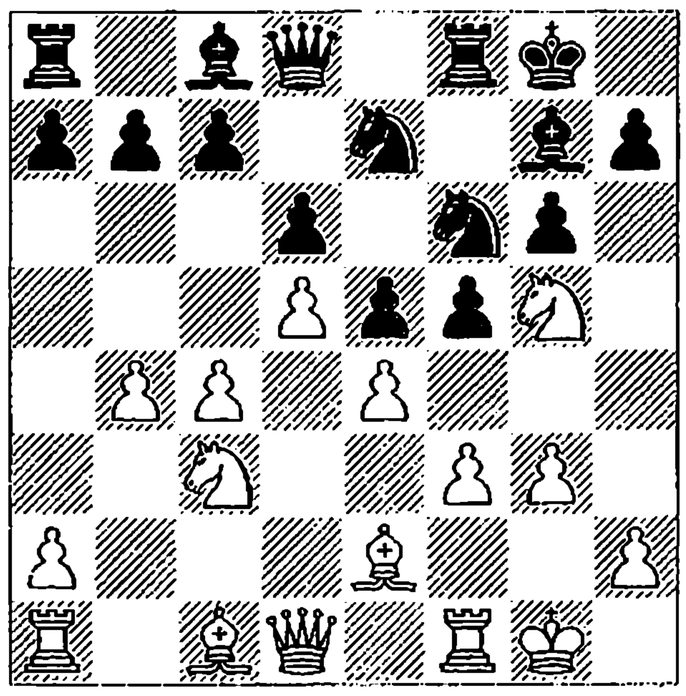
b) 10...f5!? 11 ♘g5 (or 11 ♕b3 h6!? 12 a4 fxe4 13 ♘xe4 ♘f4 14 ♗xf4 ♖xf4 15 cxd6 cxd6 16 ♗d3 b6! with sufficient counterplay for Black, Grivas-Nunn, Athens (4) 1991) 11...♘f4! 12 ♗xf4 exf4 13 ♖c1 (interesting is 13 e5!? ♗xe5 14 ♖c1 with compensation for the pawn because Black faces some problems with his knight; still, after 14...♔h8 15 ♕d2 a5 16 cxd6 ♕xd6 17 bxa5 c6 18 ♘f3 ♗f6 19 a6 bxa6 20 dxc6 ♕xd2 21 ♘xd2 ♘xc6 22 ♗f3 ♗xc3 23 ♖xc3 ♘d4 Black was out of danger in Bunzmann-Degraeve, Bethune open 2002) 13...♗f6!? 14 ♘e6 ♗xe6 15 dxe6 ♗xc3!? 16 ♖xc3 fxe4 17 cxd6 cxd6 and Black should not have any real problems.

10...f5 11 ♘g5!

11 ♘d2?! ♘f6 is good for Black, who will gradually get chances against the weakened white kingside.

11...♘f6 12 f3 *(D)*

B



In this critical and complex position Black must choose between several options. White's plan is linked with the move ♘e6, exchanging

Black's most important minor piece, and leading to a white pawn appearing on e6. This type of position is always a bit worrying for Black because it is not easy to win the e6-pawn (it can be supported by ♘d5, ♕b3 or c5 and ♗c4) and even when Black manages to do so, White can often obtain good compensation. However, the position also holds considerable risks for White too.

12...f4!? 13 b5

An old move. The most common continuation, 13 ♔g2, was often used by Van Wely in the 1990s. His latest game went 13...c6!? 14 ♕b3 h6 15 ♘e6 ♗xe6 16 dxe6 ♕c8 17 ♖d1 ♖d8 (not 17...♕xe6? 18 ♖xd6 ♕xd6 19 c5+) and White's piece sacrifice 18 ♘d5!? cxd5 19 cxd5 g5 (Van Wely-A.Fedorov, Batumi Echt 1999) does not look convincing. At least, I was ready to play this position with Black.

13 g4!? is almost unstudied. Possibly Black can try 13...h5 14 h3 (or 14 gxh5 ♘xh5 15 ♘e6 ♗xe6 16 dxe6 ♘c6) 14...a5 15 bxa5 ♘h7 16 ♘xh7 (16 ♘e6 ♗xe6 17 dxe6 ♘g5) 16...♔xh7 17 ♗d2 ♘g8 with chances for both sides.

In case of 13 c5, a good answer is 13...dxc5!? 14 ♗c4 (or 14 bxc5 h6 15 ♘e6 ♗xe6 16 dxe6 fxg3 with the idea 17 hxg3 ♕d4+!) 14...cxb4! 15 d6+ ♔h8 16 ♘b5 (16 dxc7?! ♕xe7 favours Black) 16...h6 17 ♘f7+ ♖xf7 18 ♗xf7 cxd6 19 ♘xd6 ♗h3 and Black has good compensation for the exchange, Cu.Hansen-Nunn, Wijk aan Zee 1991.

13...fxg3

The alternative is 13...♘e8 14 ♘e6 ♗xe6 15 dxe6 ♕c8 16 ♘d5 ♕xe6 17 ♘xe7+ ♕xe7 18 ♕d5+ ♔h8 19 ♕xb7 ♘f6, when Black is structurally worse, but may hope to create counterplay on the dark squares.

14 hxg3 h6

Attempting to force a draw.

14...♘h5 15 ♕e1 (15 ♔h2!?; 15 ♔g2?! ♘f4+! 16 gxf4 exf4 17 e5 ♗xe5 18 ♘ge4 ♘f5, Taimanov-Gufeld, USSR Ch (Moscow) 1961) 15...h6 16 ♘e6 ♗xe6 17 dxe6 ♕c8 18 ♘d5 ♕xe6 19 g4! (19 ♘xc7 ♕h3 with an attack) 19...♘f4 20 ♘xc7 ♕c8 21 ♘xa8 ♕c5+ 22 ♔h2 ♖xa8 occurred in Prakash-Sashikiran, Indian Ch (New Delhi) 2001. Black's compensation for the exchange does not seem to be sufficient.

15 ♘e6 ♗xe6 16 dxe6 ♕c8 17 ♘d5 ♕xe6 18 ♘xc7 ♕h3 19 ♖f2!? *(D)*

The only way to play for a win. 19 ♘xa8 ♕xg3+ with perpetual check was Pachman-Taimanov, Havana (Capablanca mem) 1967.

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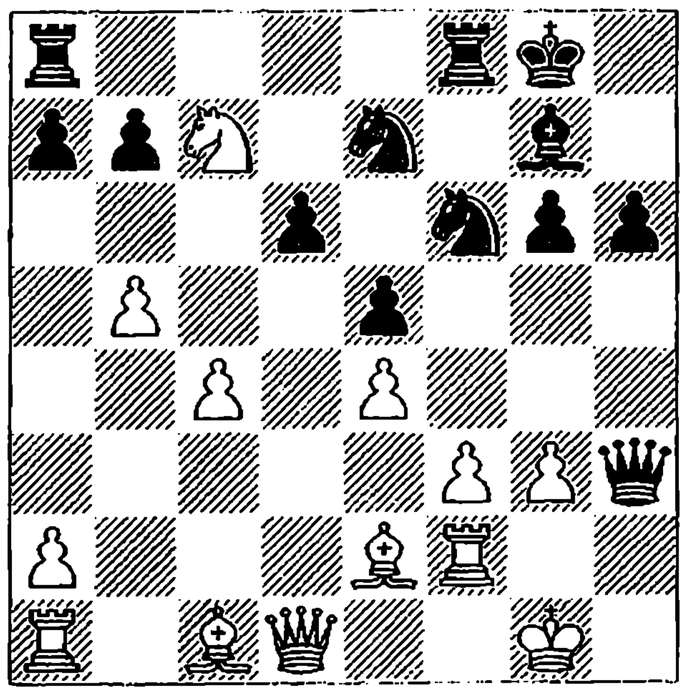


19...♖ac8

IM Mircea Pavlov suggested 19...♖ad8!? 20 ♖g2 (20 g4? ♘xg4 21 fxg4 ♖xf2 22 ♔xf2 ♖f8+ with an attack) 20...♕d7 21 ♘d5 ♘exd5 (solving the problem of the e7-knight) 22 cxd5 ♕c7, when after 23 ♗e3 White might still have slightly the better chances.

However, 19...♘xe4! is much more fun. This blow was delivered by Black in Van Wely-Degraeve, Mondariz Z 2000. Play continued 20 ♖h2 (20 fxe4 ♖xf2 21 ♔xf2 ♖f8+ 22 ♔e3 ♕xg3+ 23 ♔d2 may result in a draw after 23...♖f2 24 ♘e8 g5 25 ♕b3 ♕g2 26 ♕e3 ♘g6 27 ♗a3 ♘f4 28 ♖e1 g4 29 ♘xg7 ♖f3 30 ♕xa7 ♖d3+ 31 ♔c2 ♕xe4 32 ♗xd3 ♕xd3+ 33 ♔b2 ♕d2+ 34 ♔b3 ♕xe1 35 ♘e8 ♕b1+ according to Van Wely) 20...♕d7 (20...♕xg3+? 21 ♖g2) 21 ♘xa8 ♘xg3! 22 ♗xh6 ♗xh6 23 ♖xh6 ♔g7!? 24 ♖h2 ♘ef5! and Black, as it seems to me, had full compensation for the exchange. It is worth noting that Loek van Wely, a great expert in the 10 g3 line for White, has switched to 10 ♖e1 in his latest games.

20 ♖h2! ♕xg3+

Here again Pavlov's idea 20...♕d7 might be tried. 21 ♘d5 ♘exd5 22 cxd5 ♘h5 23 ♔g2!, planning to continue 24 ♗e3, is probably somewhat better for White because his bishops can simultaneously control sensitive squares on both flanks.

21 ♖g2 ♕h3

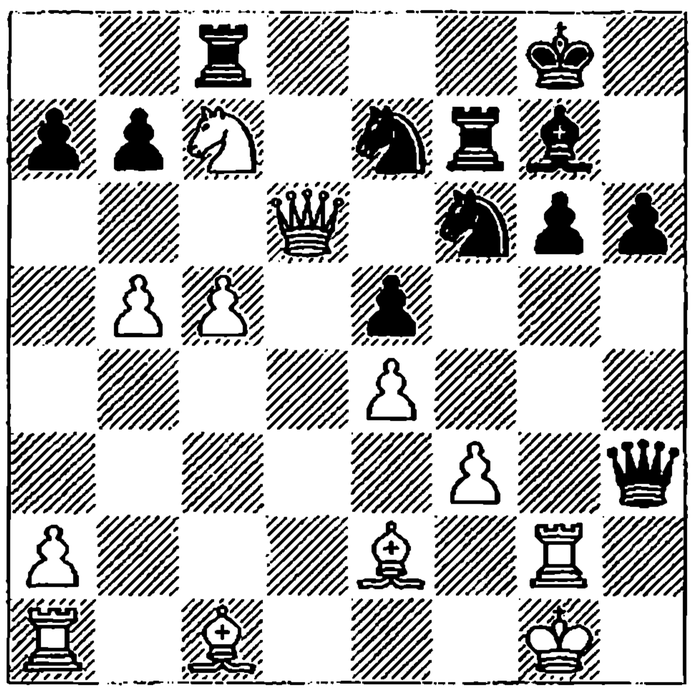
After 21...♕h4?! 22 ♘e6 ♖f7 (as in Hamilton-Marcinkiewicz, corr. 1988) Van Wely suggested 23 ♖h2 ♕g3+ 24 ♔h1 ♘h5 25 ♗e3 with an advantage for White.

22 ♕xd6 ♖f7

The sacrifice 22...♖xc7?! 23 ♕xc7 ♘h5 looks inadequate. White may consider 24 ♕xe7 ♘g3 25 ♖h2 ♘xe2+ 26 ♖xe2 ♖xf3 27 ♖g2 ♖g3 28 ♕d8+ ♔h7 29 ♕d2 ♗f8 30 ♖xg3 ♕xg3+ 31 ♔f1 ♕f3+ 32 ♕f2 ♕h1+ 33 ♔e2 ♕xe4+ 34 ♗e3 ♕xc4+ 35 ♔f3 and Black's extra pawns are insufficient compensation for the rook.

23 c5! *(D)*

Again, White avoids the drawing lines 23 ♘e6 ♘e8 24 ♕d7 ♘f6 and 23 ♕e6 ♕h4 24 ♗e3 ♖xc7 25 ♖h2 ♕g3+ 26 ♖g2.



23...♗f8?

A decisive mistake, which was the result of both miscalculation and a wrong assessment of the position.

23...♘xe4?! 24 fxe4 ♕c3 is a much better try than the text, but also insufficient. 25 ♗b2! (25 ♔h2 ♖xc7 26 ♕xc7 ♕xa1 27 ♗c4 ♕xc1 28 ♗xf7+ ♔h7! 29 ♕xe7 ♕f4+ and White cannot avoid the perpetual) 25...♕xb2 26 ♖d1! (less clear is 26 ♖f1 ♕d4+ with the idea 27 ♔h2 ♖xf1 28 ♗xf1 ♕xe4 29 ♕xe7 ♕f4+ 30 ♔g1 ♕e3+ 31 ♖f2 ♖f8 32 ♕h4 e4!) gives White an obvious advantage after 26...♕c3 27 ♗g4 ♕e3+ 28 ♔h1 ♕xe4 29 ♗xc8 ♘xc8 30 ♕d8+!? ♖f8 31 ♕d5+ ♕xd5 32 ♖xd5.

It was necessary to solve the problem of the restricted e7-knight by 23...♘f5! 24 exf5 (24 ♕e6 ♖cxc7 25 exf5 is unclear) 24...♖fxc7. White can hardly have any better continuation than 25 ♖xg6 (25 ♗c4+?! ♔h8 26 ♗e6 fails to 26...♗f8!, and the combination 25 ♗g5? hxg5 26 ♗c4+ ♔h8 27 ♖h2 ♕xh2+ 28 ♔xh2 leads to a loss for White after 28...♖d7! 29 ♕e6 ♖e8 trapping the queen) 25...♔h7! (rather than 25...♕xf5 26 ♗d3!) and White's advantage is difficult to prove.

24 ♘e6!

Now White has a dominant position: all the tactics work in his favour.

24...♘xe4

I hoped for 24...♘f5, but found too late that it loses to 25 ♕xe5! (25 ♖xg6+ also wins: 25...♔h8 26 ♕xe5 ♘h4 27 ♖g3 ♖g7 and now 28 ♗g5! – Van Wely) 25...♘h4 26 ♖g3!.

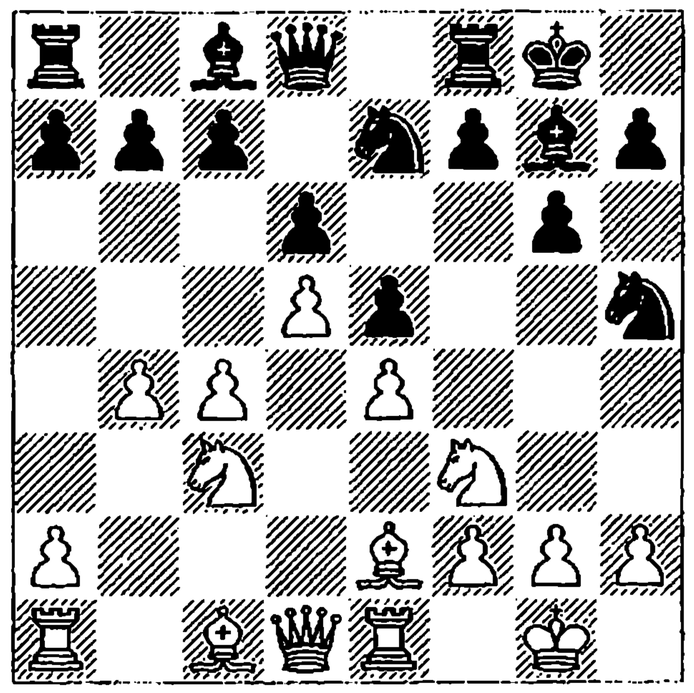
25 ♕xe5! ♘c3 26 ♗c4! ♕h4 27 ♕xc3 1-0

Game 11

Malakhatko – Golubev

Ukrainian open Ch (Alushta) 1997

1 ♘f3 d6 2 d4 ♘f6 3 c4 g6 4 ♘c3 ♗g7 5 e4 0-0 6 ♗e2 e5 7 0-0 ♘c6 8 d5 ♘e7 9 b4 ♘h5 10 ♖e1! *(D)*



This line was practically unknown until 1995, but during the last ten years has been intensively developed by Kramnik and many other leading grandmasters. White modestly prepares to retreat the bishop to f1 after ...♘f4. It turns out, and this is the main strategic point of White's 10th move, that the presence of the knight on f4 does not really help Black to develop his kingside play. In turn, White also does not develop his play quickly and his chances for an advantage are not higher here than in other main lines. However, in most lines White's position is very solid, and there is little risk that he will fall under a heavy attack, and this factor has given the 10 ♖e1 line great popularity.

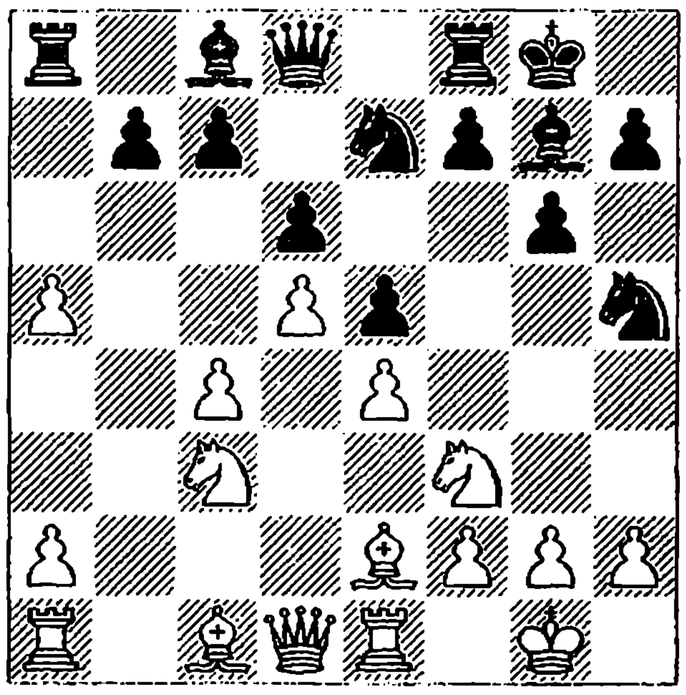
10...♘f4

Or:

a) 10...a5!? is an important possibility for Black. 11 bxa5 *(D)* (after 11 ♗a3 ♘f4! 12 ♗f1 ♗g4! Black is threatening to develop an attack

by 13...f5 and so White is nearly forced to continue 13 h3 ♗xf3 14 ♕xf3, when 14...axb4 15 ♗xb4 c5! 16 dxc6 ♘xc6 17 a3 ♘e6 equalizes easily, Kramnik-Gelfand, Dortmund 1996) and now:

B



a1) 11...f5!? 12 ♘d2 (or 12 ♘g5 ♘f6!?) 12...♘f6 13 c5 ♖xa5 14 cxd6 cxd6 15 a4 (15 ♘c4 ♖a6 16 f3 b5! 17 ♘e3 ♕a5! 18 ♗d2 b4, Dambacher-Nijboer, Groningen 2003, with the idea 19 ♗xa6 bxc3 20 ♗xc8 ♖xc8 21 ♗c1 fxe4 22 fxe4 c2!) 15...♗h6 (15...fxe4!? 16 ♘dxe4 ♘xe4 17 ♘xe4 ♗f5 18 f3 ♔h8 19 ♗b5 ♗xe4 20 fxe4 ♘g8 21 ♗e3 ♖a8 22 ♔h1 was slightly better for White in P.H.Nielsen-Nijboer, Spanish Cht (Sanxenxo) 2004) 16 ♗a3 (16 ♘c4!? ♗xc1 17 ♖xc1 ♖c5 18 f3 is possibly critical, where the attempt to activate the e7-knight by 18...g5 might not be sufficient after 19 ♘b5!?) 16...♗xd2 17 ♕xd2 fxe4 18 ♗b5 ♗f5 19 h3 ♖a8 20 g4 ♗c8 21 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 22 ♖xe4 ♗d7. This position occurred in Kramnik-Smirin, Russia vs ROW rpd 2002 and is not worse for Black according to Smirin's analysis, who provided an interesting variation in *Informator*: 23 ♗xd6!? ♗xb5 24 ♗xe5 ♗e8 25 ♗b2 ♘xd5 26 ♖e6!! ♘f4 27 ♕c3 ♘xh3+! 28 ♔h2! ♖xf2+ 29 ♔xh3 ♖xb2 30 ♕xb2 ♕d3+ with equality.

a2) 11...♖xa5 12 ♘d2 (urging Black to decide immediately where his knight will go; in case of 12 a4 c5! 13 ♘d2 {or 13 ♖a3} Black is not obliged to put his knight on f4 and can play 13...♘f6! instead), and now 12...♘f4 (after 12...♘f6 White stops ...c5 by 13 ♘b3 ♖a8 14 c5!) 13 ♗f1 transposes to the main game. *Note that 10...a5 looks like a more precise move-order for Black in comparison with 10...♘f4 11 ♗f1 a5 12 bxa5 ♖xa5, because in the latter case White is not obliged to play 13 ♘d2 at once.*

b) The sharpest and most principled of Black's options is 10...f5 11 ♘g5 ♘f6 *(D)* (11...♘f4 12 ♗xf4 exf4 13 ♖c1 ♗f6 14 ♘e6 ♗xe6 15 dxe6 ♗xc3 16 ♖xc3 fxe4 17 ♗f1 gives White an edge, Kramnik-Shirov, Tilburg 1997).

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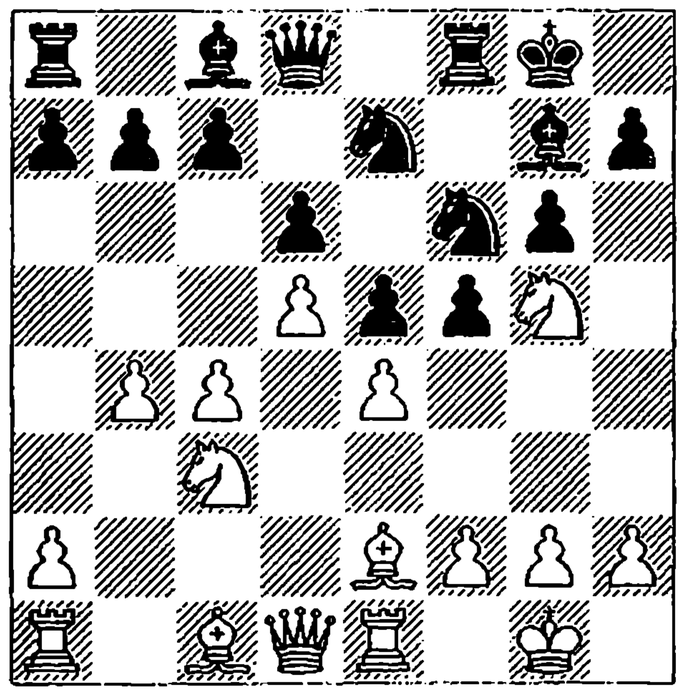

To enter this position with Black one needs not only courage, but also a good theoretical background, because it has featured in hundreds of serious games in recent years, and the results of the latest research change the theory nearly every month. I shall limit myself to a very brief overview of the sides' possibilities:

b1) 12 f3!? is a sharp and quite topical line. Then:

b11) 12...♘h5 13 c5 ♘f4 14 ♗c4 ♔h8 (14...a5 is hardly sufficient after 15 b5!? or 15 bxa5 ♖xa5 16 cxd6 ♕xd6 {Goloshchapov-Golubev, Ukrainian Ch (Ordzhonikidze) 2001} 17 ♗e3!) 15 g3 h6 16 gxf4!? exf4 17 e5! hxg5 18 exd6 cxd6 19 ♗b2 with an initiative for the pawn, Korobov-Bogner, Århus jr 2005.

b12) 12...c6 13 ♔h1 h6 14 ♘e6 ♗xe6 15 dxe6 ♘e8 16 ♕b3 ♘c7 17 c5 d5 18 exd5 cxd5 19 ♗b2 ♕c8!? (19...♕e8 was first tried in the game Bareev-Topalov, Dortmund Ct 2003; the latest word is Van Wely-Stellwagen, Dutch Ch (Leeuwarden) 2005: 20 ♖ad1 ♖d8 21 a4 a6 22 ♘xd5! ♖xd5 23 ♗c4 ♖xd1?! 24 ♖xd1 ♕b8 25 ♖d7! with menacing compensation for the piece; one more possibility is 19...a5!? with the idea 20 b5?! ♘xe6; the immediate 19...♘xe6?! fails to 20 ♘xd5! ♘xd5 21 ♗c4) 20 ♘b5 a6 21 ♘d6 ♕xe6 22 ♘xb7 ♖ab8 23 ♘d6 ♘c6 24 a3 ♔h7 25 ♕a4 ♕d7 26 ♖ad1 ♖fd8, Bareev-Polzin, Rethymnon ECC 2003. "Strangely enough, analysing this position I came to the conclusion that somehow Black manages to

keep counterchances and he has reasonable play everywhere." -- GM Avrukh in *CBM*.

b13) 12...♔h8 13 ♗e3 (13 c5 dxc5! 14 bxc5 h6 15 ♘e6 ♗xe6 16 dxe6 ♕d4+! 17 ♕xd4 exd4 18 ♘b5 fxe4 was OK for Black in Gyimesi-Radjabov, Moscow (Aeroflot) 2005) 13...♗h6!? 14 ♘f7+ ♖xf7 15 ♗xh6 f4 possibly gives Black sufficient counterplay: 16 g4 (16 c5 ♘eg8 17 ♗g5 h6 18 ♗h4 ♖g7 19 ♗f2 g5 20 g4 fxg3 21 hxg3 ♘h5 22 ♔h2 g4, Pogorelov-Nataf, Reykjavik open 2004) 16...a5!? 17 bxa5 (17 a3 ♘eg8 18 ♗g5 h6 19 ♗h4?! g5 20 ♗f2 h5 21 h3 hxg4 22 hxg4 axb4 23 axb4 ♖xa1 24 ♕xa1 ♘xg4 25 fxg4 f3) 17...♘eg8 18 ♗g5 h6 19 ♗h4 ♖xa5, Al Khateeb-Habermehl, corr. 1997.

b2) 12 ♗f3 (the solid main move) 12...c6 *(D)*.

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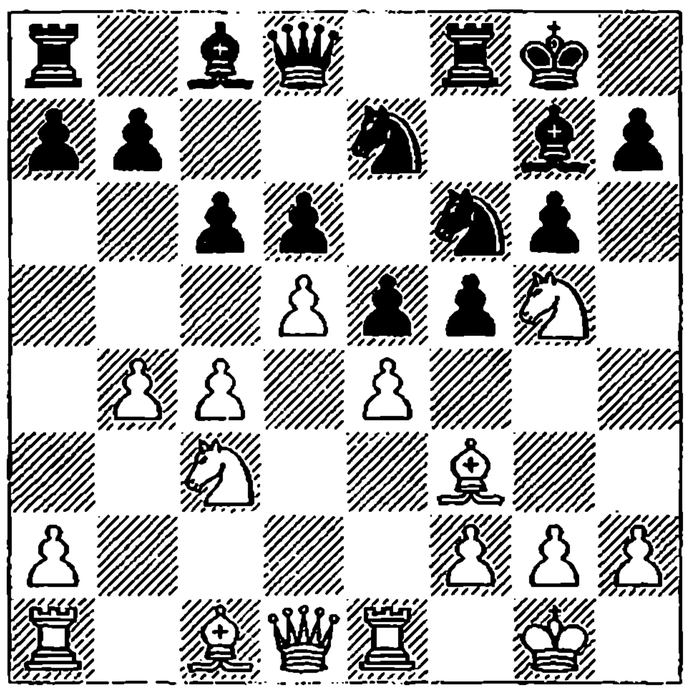


Black prepares a counterattack in the centre, which White can meet in various ways:

b21) 13 ♗e3 is Kramnik's favourite move. As of now, the continuation 13...cxd5 14 cxd5 h6 15 ♘e6 ♗xe6 16 dxe6 fxe4 17 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 18 ♗xe4 d5 19 ♗c2 b6! 20 ♕g4 e4! seems to be fully playable for Black. 21 ♖ad1 (21 ♖ac1!? ♕d6 22 ♖ed1 ♕xb4 23 ♗b3 ♖ac8 24 ♖b1 h5 25 ♕h4 ♖f5 26 ♗g5 ♗f8!?) 21...♕c7 22 ♗b3 ♖f5! 23 ♖d2 (23 ♕h4!? ♖af8!? 24 g4 ♖e5! with the idea 25 ♗xh6 ♗xh6 26 ♕xh6 ♕d6) 23...♔h7! 24 ♖ed1 ♕c6 25 ♖c2 (25 ♕h4 ♕xe6 26 g4 cannot be hardly dangerous for Black; he can answer by 26...♖e5 27 ♕g3 ♖f8 28 ♗f4 ♖xf4 29 ♕xf4 ♖g5 30 h3 ♗e5 with the idea 31 ♕e3? ♖xg4+! 32 hxg4 ♕xg4+ 33 ♔f1 ♘f5 and Black wins) 25...♕xe6 26 ♖c7 and now 26...♕d6 (Verduyn-Sofronie, Condom open 2004) or 26...h5.

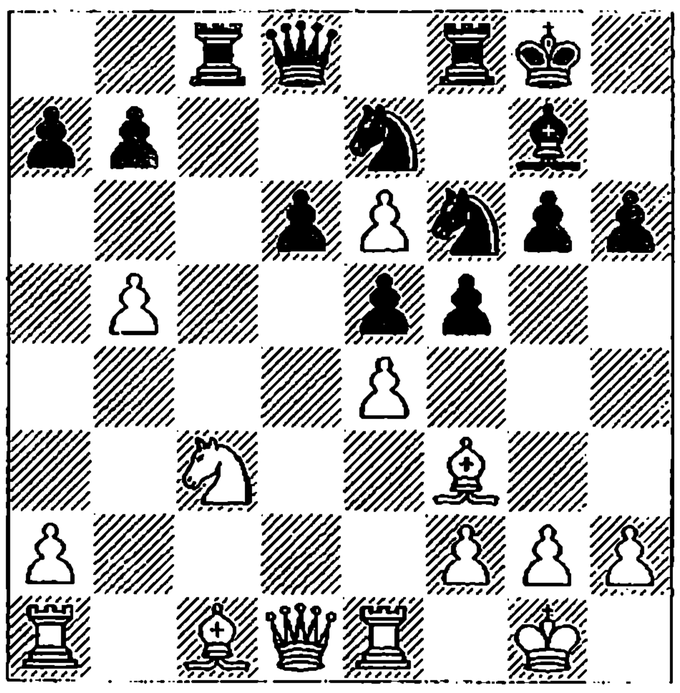
b22) 13 ♗b2 h6 14 ♘e6 ♗xe6 15 dxe6 fxe4 16 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 17 ♖xe4! d5 (the alternative is 17...♘f5 18 b5) 18 cxd5 cxd5 19 ♖xe5 ♗xe5 20 ♗xe5 ♕b6 attracted special attention after the game Shirov-Radjabov, Linares 2004 where White introduced the novelty 21 ♗b2!? (prepared by Lanka and Shirov back in 1997) and after 21...♔h7 22 ♕e2!? d4 23 h4 ♖f6 24 ♖e1 ♕xb4 25 a3! ♕d6 26 h5!, the game continuation 26...♖af8 27 ♕e4! ♘c6 28 hxg6+ ♔g7 29 ♗c1 ♕e7 30 ♗xh6+ ♔xh6 31 ♕h4+ ♔xg6 32 ♗xc6! bxc6 33 ♖e5! gave him a clear advantage. The whole line is extremely complicated. I noticed that 26...♖d8 could have been an improvement for Black. However, it may not be entirely convincing (Shirov recommends 27 ♗xb7 gxh5 28 ♕d3+ ♔g8 29 ♖e4! ♘f5 30 ♗a6!) – so Black maybe should look for alternatives at an earlier point.

b23) 13 ♖b1 h6 14 ♘e6 ♗xe6 15 dxe6 fxe4 16 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 17 ♗xe4 d5 18 ♗c2 occurred in Bareev-Radjabov, Sarajevo 2003. After 18...♕d6 19 ♕g4 h5!? 20 ♕h3 (20 c5 ♕b8!? with the idea 21 ♕g3 e4) 20...e4 21 ♗e3 b6 22 b5 d4 23 ♗g5 d3 24 ♗b3 Black found the truly fantastic resource 24...♖xf2! with the main idea 25 ♔xf2 ♗d4+ 26 ♗e3 ♘f5! 27 ♔g1 d2!. Bareev opted for 25 ♖xe4?! ♖af8, which gave Black the advantage, but the critical 25 c5! leads to great complications.

b24) 13 ♕b3 is another option for White. The game Elianov-Radjabov, Moscow (Aeroflot) 2005 continued 13...h6 14 ♘e6 ♗xe6 15 dxe6 ♕c8!? (15...fxe4 16 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 17 ♗xe4 with the idea 17...d5 18 cxd5 cxd5 19 ♖d1!) 16 ♗a3 ♕xe6 17 ♖ad1 ♖fd8 18 b5 ♔h7 with complicated play where White has typically good compensation for the pawn in the spirit of several old games by Taimanov.

b25) 13 b5 cxd5 14 cxd5 h6 15 ♘e6 ♗xe6 16 dxe6 ♖c8 *(D)* (safer is 16...fxe4 17 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 18 ♗xe4 d5 19 ♗a3! dxe4 20 ♕xd8 ♖fxd8 21 ♗xe7 ♖e8 22 ♗c5 and here a draw was agreed in the stem game O.Danielian-Golubev, Moscow 1996, but further games showed that after 22...♖xe6 23 ♗e3! a6 24 b6 Black still has some problems to solve) and then:

b251) 17 ♕b3 d5 (17...♖xc3 has not so far been tried; possibly the sacrifice is over-optimistic – Black eliminates the e4-pawn, but the e6-pawn continues to disturb him) 18 ♘xd5 ♘fxd5 19 exd5 e4 20 d6 ♖c3?! (20...♕xd6! 21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♗a3 ♕b6! 22 ♗xe7 ♖fe8!, as suggested by V.Mikhalevski, most likely solves all Black's problems). Here 21 dxe7 (instead of 21 ♗a3?!, Ki.Georgiev-Ponomariov, Istanbul OL 2000) is unpleasant for Black: 21...♕xe7 22 ♕a4 exf3 23 ♗b2! and 23...♕g5?! 24 g3 ♕h5 (Savchenko-Golubev, Odessa blitz 2002) is refuted by 25 h4! ♕g4 26 ♕xg4 fxg4 27 ♖ad1 ♖c7 28 e7.

b252) According to Ponomariov the critical line is 17 ♗b2! fxe4 18 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 19 ♖xe4 d5 20 ♖xe5! ♗xe5 21 ♗xe5 ♕b6 22 ♗b2 ♖f4 23 ♕e2 d4 24 ♖e1 with compensation.

11 ♗f1 a5

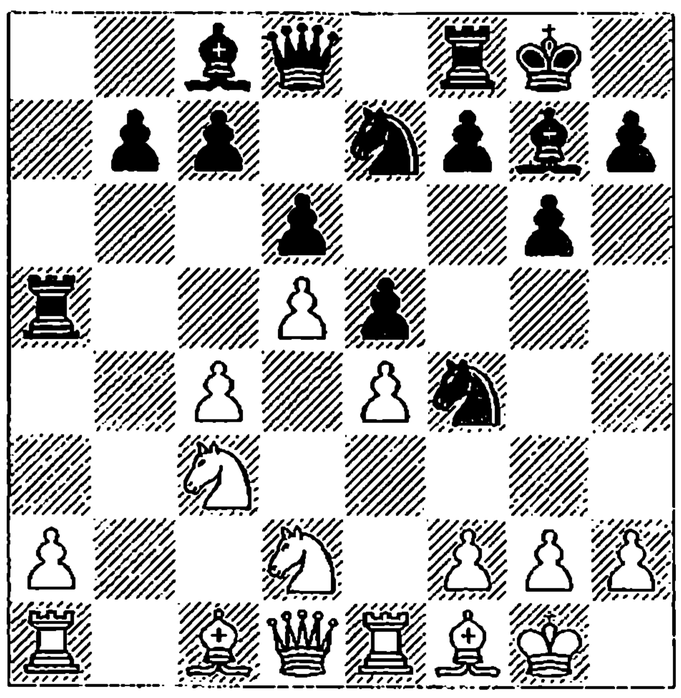
11...f5?! is not good because of 12 ♗xf4 exf4 13 e5! with pressure for White.

12 bxa5 ♖xa5

12...c5 usually transposes.

13 ♘d2 *(D)*

Kramnik's recipe. White can also try to delay ♘d2 and begin with 13 a4!?, when 13...♗g4 14 h3 ♗xf3 15 ♕xf3 f5 16 ♕d1! does not bring equality for Black.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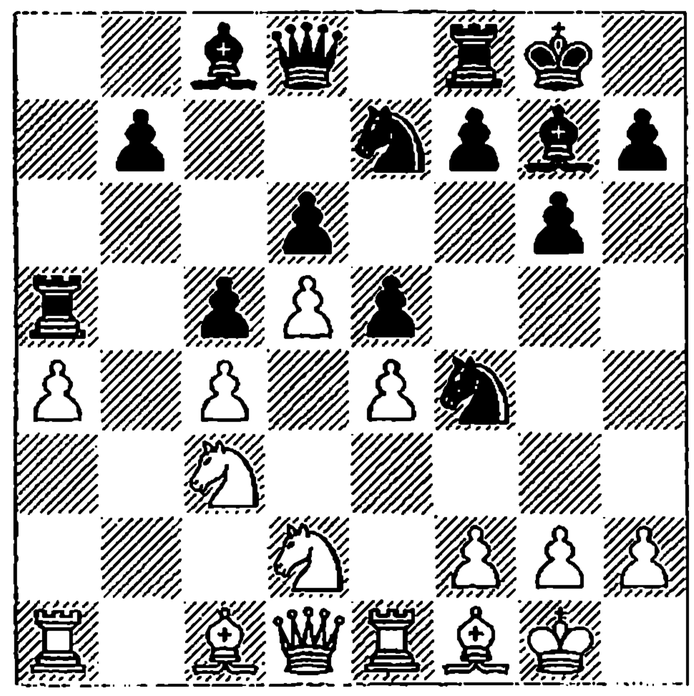
13...c5

13...♖a8!? 14 a4 f5 is a rare continuation, first used at grandmaster level by Bologan in 2005. In Van Wely-Bacrot, Dortmund 2005 White obtained a slight advantage following 15 ♖a3 fxe4 16 ♘dxe4 b6 17 ♘b5 ♔h8 18 g3 ♘h5 19 a5 bxa5 20 ♗d2 ♗f5 21 ♖xa5.

After 13...c5, 14 dxc6 hardly makes much sense for White. So we can state that the queenside is stabilized. "What are White's achievements there?", one may ask. The answer is: next to zero. But, incredibly, Black faces a problem on the other flank, because it is not clear how he can develop his play, having the knight on f4. Thus, ...g5 is strategically risky because it weakens Black's kingside forever. Meanwhile ...f5 can always be answered by g3! and after the knight retreats to h5, by exf5!. On the other hand, White has a realistic plan, based on the moves a4, ♘b5, ♖a3, ♗b2, which helps him to prepare g3 and f4, developing pressure in the centre. This does not mean that White is significantly better, but I would like to underline clearly the kind of strategic problem which Black faces.

14 ♘b3

An inaccuracy. In accordance with Kramnik's plan, stronger is 14 a4! *(D)*. Then, Black has the following possibilities:


B

a) 14...♔h8 (or 14...♖a6 15 ♖a3 and now 15...♔h8), preparing ...♘g8, will be considered separately in Game 12 (Korobov-Golubev).

b) 14...♖a6 15 ♖a3 and here:

b1) The famous game Kramnik-Kasparov, Novgorod 1997 (actually, one of Kasparov's last King's Indian games with Black) continued 15...g5 16 g3 ♘h3+ 17 ♗xh3 ♗xh3 18 ♕h5 ♕d7 and now 19 ♕xg5 (as played by Kramnik) gives Black at least practical compensation after 19...f5!?. However, 19 f3 might be stronger: 19...g4 20 ♘d1 f5 (20...gxf3?! 21 ♘f2 ♗g2 22

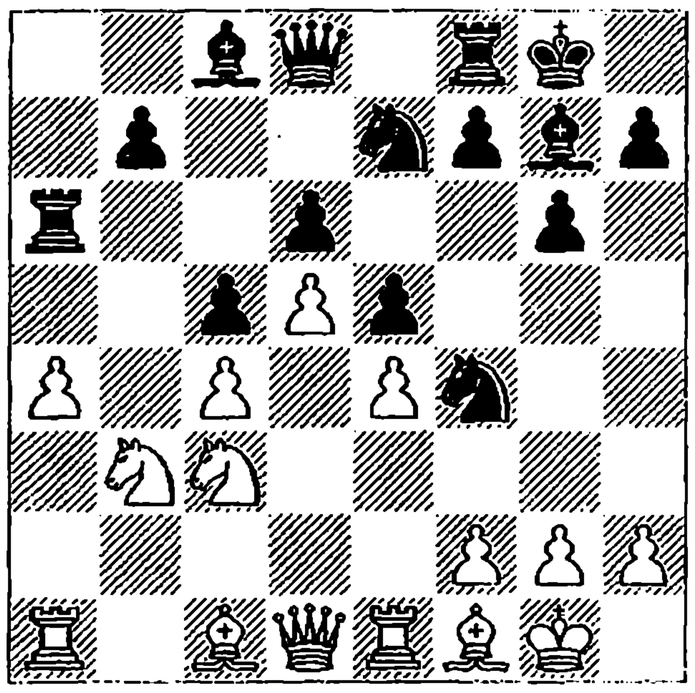
♘xf3 ♗xf3 23 ♖xf3 is clearly better for White, who is ready to attack Black's king by ♗h6, ♘g4, etc.) 21 ♘f2 (not 21 ♘e3? gxf3 22 ♕xh3 f2+ 23 ♔xf2 fxe4+ 24 ♔g2 ♖f2+, as pointed out by Kramnik) 21...♖xa4 22 ♖xa4 ♕xa4 23 exf5 ♖xf5 24 ♕h4 and White is better (Khuzman).

b2) 15...♘h5!? (starting the transfer of the knight from f4 to e8 or d7) 16 ♘b5 ♘f6 17 g3! ♘d7 (17...♘e8 18 f4!) 18 ♗b2 f5 19 f4! (Xu Jun-Magai, Istanbul OL 2000) 19...exf4 20 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 21 gxf4 fxe4 22 ♘xe4 with an initiative for White.

c) It makes sense to begin the knight's journey immediately: 14...♘h5!? 15 ♖a3 ♘f6 16 ♘b5 ♘e8 (16...♘d7?? 17 ♘xd6) 17 ♗b2 (17 g3 f5!) and here, instead of 17...f5?! 18 f4! exf4 19 e5 dxe5 20 ♗xe5 ♗xe5 21 ♖xe5, when White has excellent compensation for the pawn (Van Wely-A.Fedorov, Leon Echt 2001), 17...♖a6!? could be stronger, with a playable position for Black.

14...♖a6 15 a4 *(D)*

B



15...f5!? 16 g3 ♘h5 17 ♗e2

Or 17 exf5 ♘xf5 18 ♘e4 (not 18 g4 ♘h4 19 gxh5? ♘f3+ and White shall regret that he removed the knight from d2 too early) 18...♗h6! with approximately equal chances, S.Ivanov-Renet, Budapest ECC 1996.

17...♘f6

Black has solved all his problems and is certainly not worse now.

18 ♗g5!? h6 19 ♗xf6 ♖xf6 20 a5 ♕f8 21 ♖a2 ♔h8

21...f4!? was also possible but I did not want to allow the typical 22 ♗g4 with an exchange of bishops.

22 ♘a4!? fxe4 23 ♗g4 ♗xg4

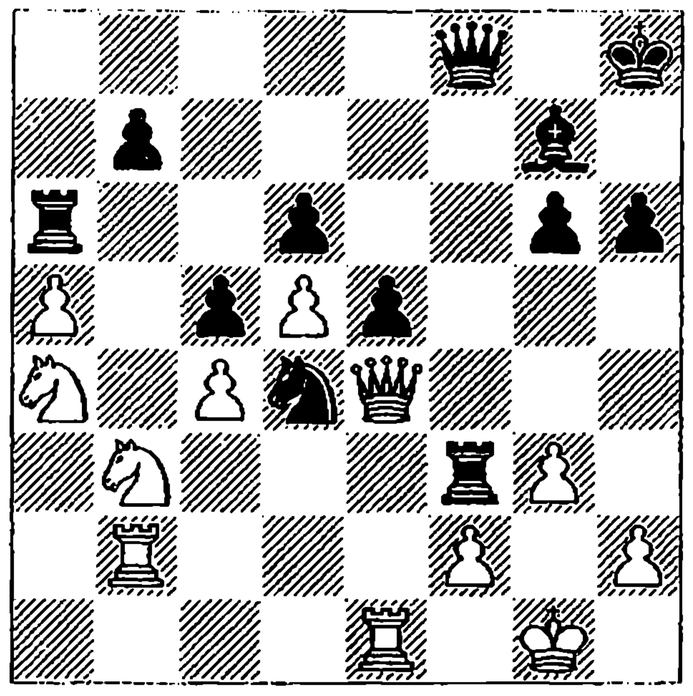
23...♘f5?! 24 ♘b6! h5 25 ♘xc8 ♕xc8 26 ♗h3 would leave White with some advantage, but 23...♗f5!? was a decent alternative. Play could continue 24 ♘c3 ♕c8 25 ♖xe4 with approximate equality.

24 ♕xg4 ♖f3 25 ♖b2! ♘f5

White will capture the e4-pawn anyway, so Black at least activates his knight.

26 ♕xe4 ♘d4 *(D)*

W



Black's activity compensates for his problems with his bad bishop.

27 ♖e3!?

27 ♘xd4!? cxd4 28 ♕xg6 (not 28 ♖eb1? ♖xa5 29 ♖xb7 ♔h7 30 ♖b8 ♕f6 31 ♘b6 ♖a2 32 ♘d7 ♖xg3+) 28...♖xa5 29 ♘b6 leads to a position with chances for both sides.

27...♖xe3 28 fxe3

Not 28 ♕xe3?! e4!.

28...♘xb3

Black could force an immediate draw by 28...♘f3+ 29 ♔g2 ♘e1+, but he is playing for more.

29 ♖xb3 ♖xa5 30 ♘c3 ♖a1+ 31 ♖b1 ♖xb1+ 32 ♕xb1

Simpler was 32 ♘xb1!, when despite Black's extra pawn White is not in danger.

32...e4! 33 ♘xe4 ♕f3 34 ♘xd6

Not 34 ♕d3? ♗d4!.

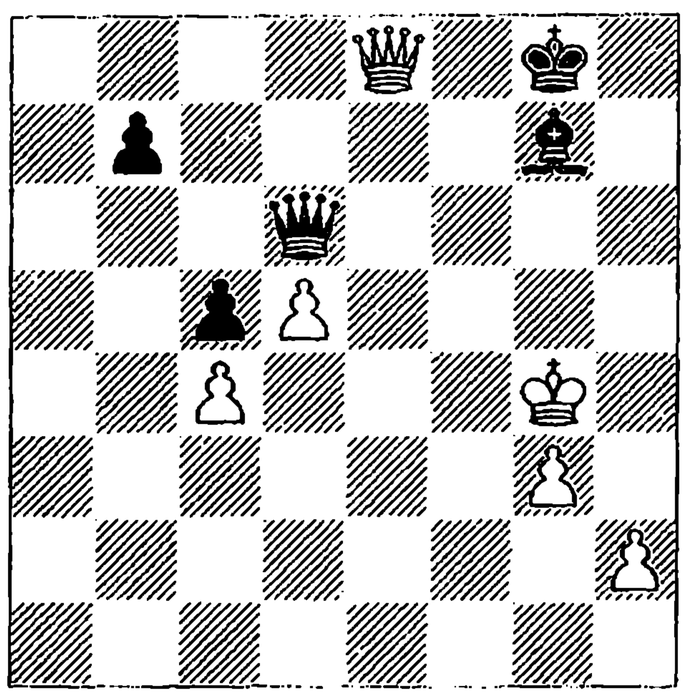
34...♕xe3+ 35 ♔g2 ♕e2+ 36 ♔h3 g5

One more winning attempt. 36...♕h5+ would lead to perpetual.

37 ♕e4

37 ♕g6! is simpler. Then Black has nothing better than 37...♕f1+ 38 ♔g4 ♕e2+ with a draw.

37...♕f1+! 38 ♔g4 h5+ 39 ♔xh5 ♕h3+ 40 ♔xg5 ♕h6+ 41 ♔f5 ♕f6+ 42 ♔g4 ♕xd6 43 ♕e8+ ♔h7 44 ♕h5+ ♔g8 45 ♕e8+ *(D)*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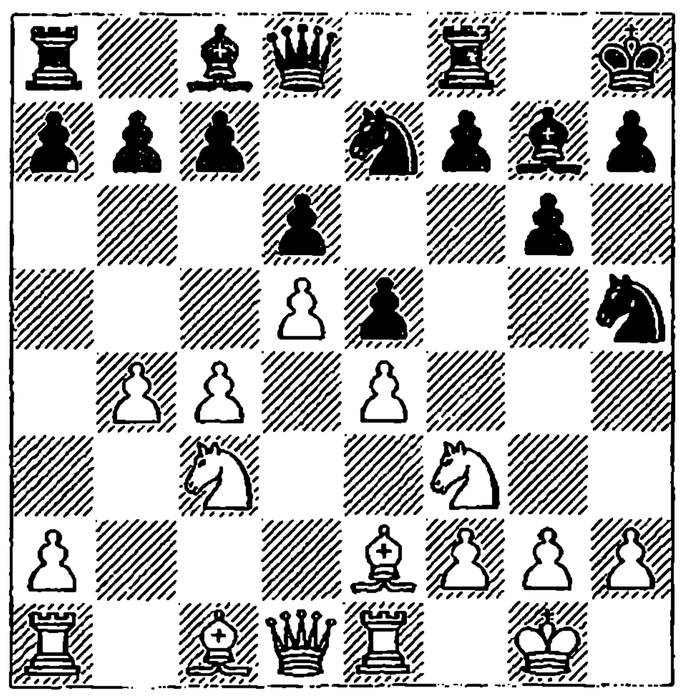
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Black has won a bishop for two pawns, but he isn't really better: after all, White has three passed pawns and Black has none.

45...♗f8

Or 45...♕f8 46 ♕xf8+! ♔xf8 47 ♔f5 ♔e7 48 h4! ♔d6 49 ♔e4 ♗f6 50 h5 ♗g5 51 g4 and I do not know who is playing for a win here.

46 ♔f5 ♔g7 47 ♕e6 b5?!

A nervous move. 47...♕a6! is correct, with an inevitable draw after, for example, 48 ♕d7+ ♔g8 49 ♕e6+.

48 cxb5 c4 49 ♕xd6 ♗xd6 50 ♔e4

Now Black has problems. Fortunately, he is not losing in this endgame, but it was anyway rather silly to enter it.

50...c3! 51 ♔d3 ♗e5 52 b6 ♔f6 53 g4

Also after 53 b7 ♔e7 54 b8♕ ♗xb8 55 ♔xc3 ♗e5+ White cannot win.

53...♔e7 54 g5

Or 54 b7 ♔d7 55 g5 ♔c7 56 h4 ♔xb7 57 h5 ♔c7 58 h6 ♗f4! with a draw.

54...♔d6 55 g6 ♔xd5 56 b7 ♔e6 57 h4 ♔f6 58 h5 ♔g7 ½-½

Game 12
Korobov – Golubev
Ukrainian Ch (Ordzhonikidze) 2001

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 5 ♘f3 0-0 6 ♗e2 e5 7 0-0 ♘c6 8 d5 ♘e7 9 b4 ♘h5 10 ♖e1 ♔h8!? *(D)*

This move is rare and, I am afraid, rather deservedly so.

11 ♘d2!

Possibly the most precise. One of the tricks which Black may hope to execute by playing 10...♔h8 is 11 a4 f5 12 ♘g5 ♘f4! 13 ♗xf4 exf4 14 ♖c1 ♘xd5! 15 ♘xd5 (15 ♕xd5 is not a check now) 15...♕xg5 16 ♘xc7 fxe4 17 ♘xa8 f3 with an attack.

11...♘f4 12 ♗f1 a5 13 bxa5 ♖xa5

After 13...c5 White can defend his extra pawn by 14 ♘b3.

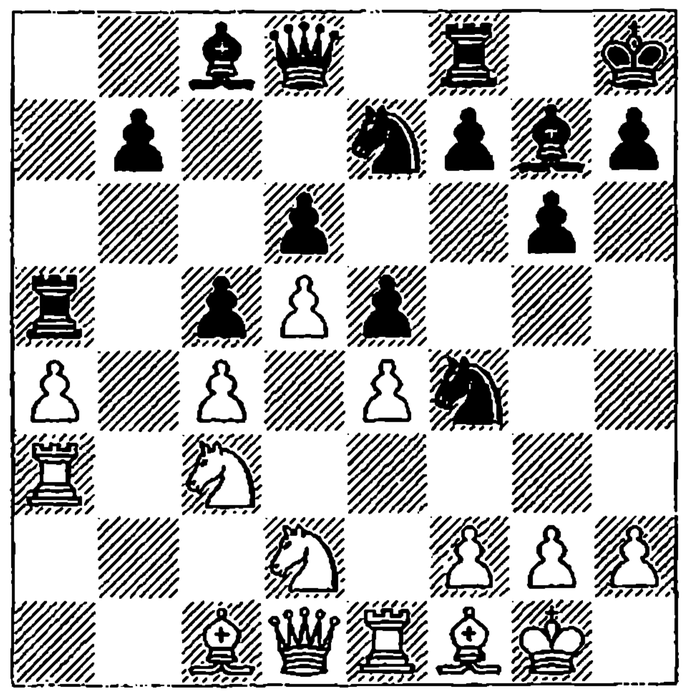
14 a4

14 ♘b3!? ♖a8 15 c5 is White's additional possibility. In similar lines with 10...a5 and 10...♘f4, he has no time for ♘b3 and c5.

14...c5

We have reached a position that normally occurs via 10...a5 11 bxa5 ♖xa5 12 ♘d2 ♘f4 13 ♗f1 c5 14 a4 ♔h8.

15 ♖a3 *(D)*


B

15...♖a6

A topical idea here is 15...♘g8 16 ♘b5 ♘h6!? 17 ♘f3 (after 17 g3 Black has 17...♘h3+!) 17...♖a6 (17...f6?! loses a pawn to 18 ♗xf4! exf4 19 ♕d2, Sargisian-A.Fedorov, Moscow (Aeroflot) 2002, and here 19...g5 20 ♘xd6 ♕xd6? 21 ♕xa5 does not help Black) 18 ♗xf4 exf4 19 e5 ♘f5 20 exd6 (after 20 ♕d2, 20...♖e8 21 ♕xf4 ♗h6 is dubious due to 22 ♕g4! with the idea 22...♘d4 23 ♕g3 ♘c2 24 ♘xd6! ♖xd6 25 exd6 ♘xe1 26 ♘xe1 ♖xe1? 27 ♕c3+ but 20...dxe5 21 ♘xe5 g5 seems to be playable)

20...♘xd6 21 ♘d2 ♕a5!? 22 ♘e4 ♖e8 23 ♘ec3 ♗e5!? (improving on the game Elianov-A.Fedorov, Dubai open 2004, which Avrukh annotated in *CBM*) 24 ♖b3 ♔g7 with an acceptable position for Black, Golod-Avrukh, Israeli Ch (Ramat Aviv) 2004.

16 ♘b5 ♘h5

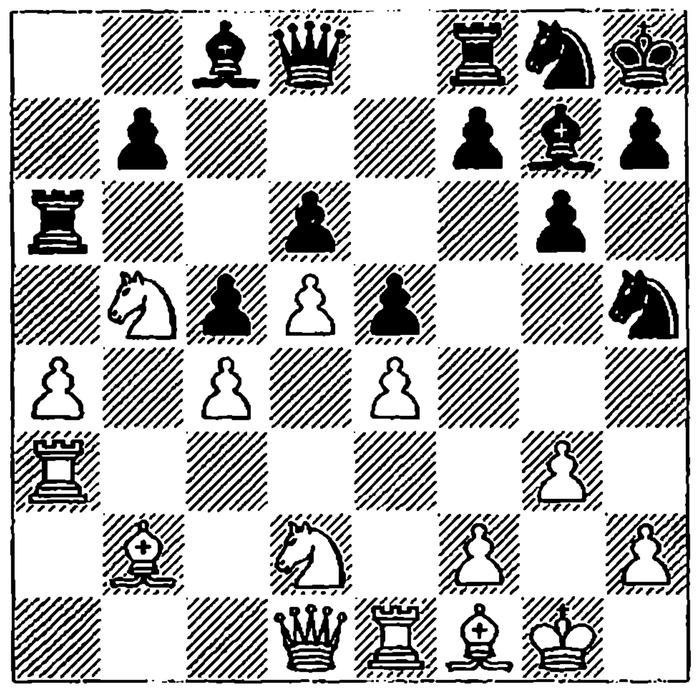
After 16...♘g8 17 g3! Black must continue 17...♘h5 anyway (here 17...♘h3+? 18 ♗xh3 ♗xh3 is impossible: 19 g4 ♕h4 20 ♖g3! followed by 21 ♘f3 and White wins the bishop).

17 ♗b2

After 17 g3 Black can try 17...♗h6!? (if he wishes to avoid 17...♘g8 18 ♗e2 ♘hf6 19 f4!?, as in Malakhatko-Maciejewski, Polanica Zdroj open 2000).

17...♘g8 18 g3 *(D)*

B



18...♗h6!?

After 18...♘hf6, as in Ionov-Dolmatov, Russian Ch (Elista) 2001, 19 f4 looks logical and gives White some initiative.

18...♘h6!? 19 ♗e2 occurred in Xu Jun-Xie Jun, Taiyuan 2004 and here 19...f5! deserves attention: 20 ♗xh5 (20 exf5 ♗xf5 21 g4?! ♕g5 22 h4 ♕xh4 23 gxf5 ♖xf5 favours Black) 20...gxh5 21 ♕xh5 f4 with compensation for the pawn – Avrukh.

19 f4

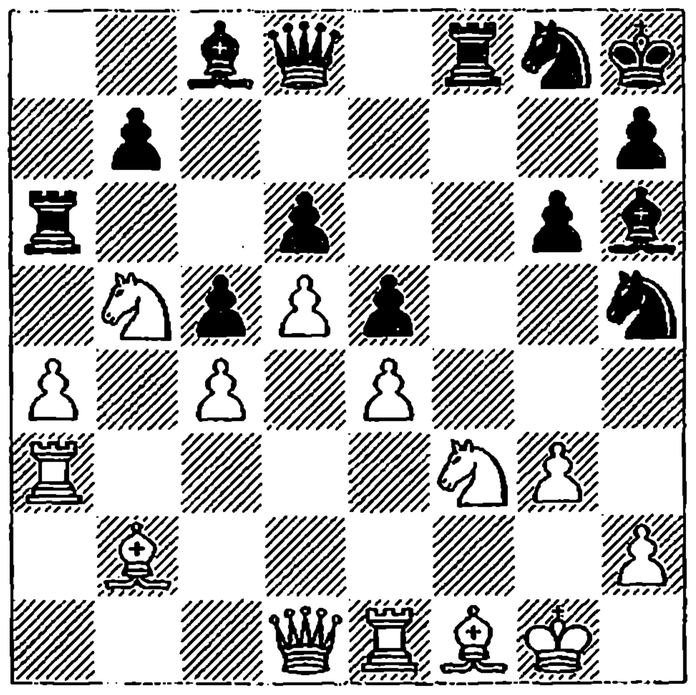
19 ♗g2 is a decent alternative (transposing to Stohl-Muse, Bundesliga 1997/8 and several other games), with slightly better chances for White.

19...f6 20 fxe5

After 20 f5?! Black has 20...gxf5 21 ♕xh5 ♗xd2. I worried about 20 ♗e2!? exf4 21 ♗xh5 gxh5, when White should have good compensation for the pawn after, for example, 22 ♕xh5 fxg3 23 ♖e2.

20...fxe5 21 ♘f3 *(D)*

B



21...♘gf6

A risky decision – Black allows a piece sacrifice in the centre. It could be prevented by 21...♗g7, when White has some advantage following 22 ♗g2.

22 ♗g2

The immediate 22 ♘xd6! ♖xd6 23 ♗xe5 ♖a6 24 ♗a1 was probably even stronger than the game continuation.

22...♔g8

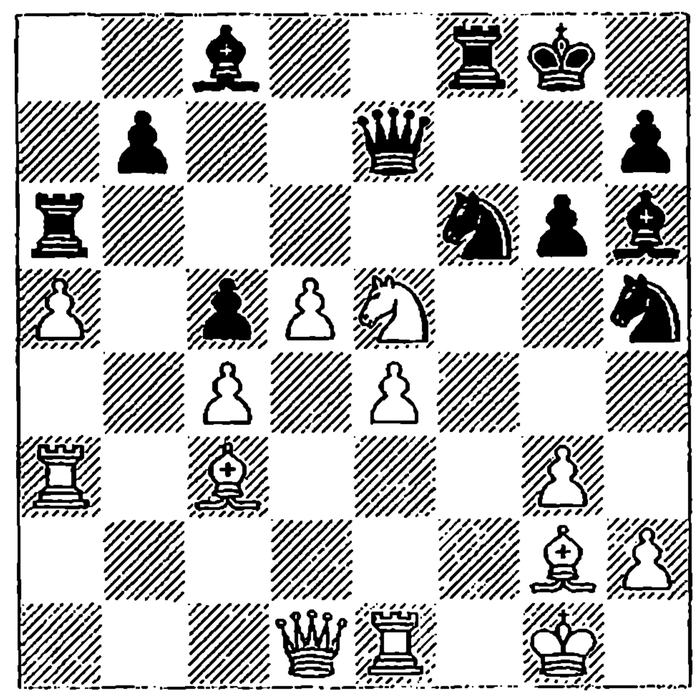
22...♘g4!? deserves some attention, with the idea 23 h3 ♘gf6 24 g4 ♘f4 25 g5 ♗xh3.

23 ♘xd6! ♖xd6 24 ♘xe5 ♖b6

GM Christian Gabriel, who annotated the game for the ChessGate website, proposed 24...♖e8!? as a better choice. However, it can hardly change the assessment: White has fantastic positional compensation for the piece.

25 ♗c3 ♕e7 26 a5 ♖a6 *(D)*

W



27 ♖b3!

The immediate 27 ♘d3?! allows Black counterplay by 27...♘g4!, so White tries to improve the position of his pieces gradually. It is really hard to find any constructive ideas for Black.

27...♖e8 28 ♕b1 ♕c7

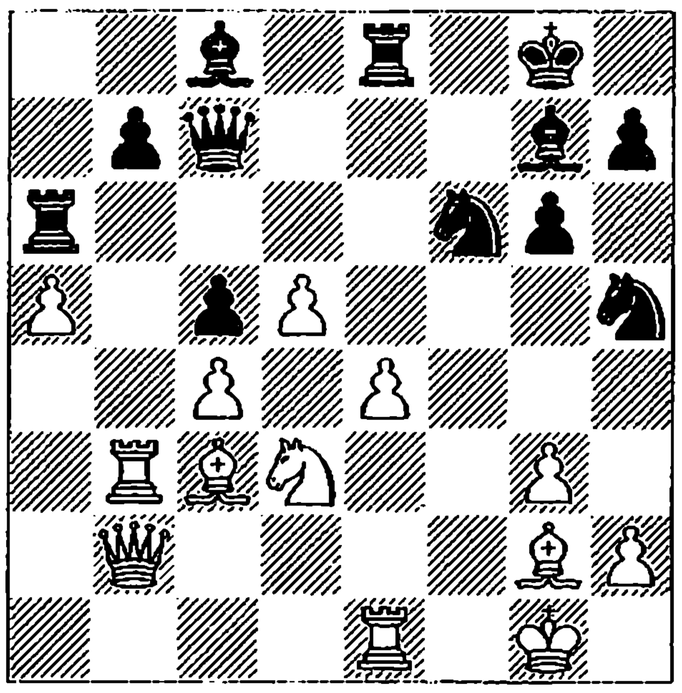
In Korobov's opinion, the waiting 28...♖f8!? could have been preferred.

29 ♕b2 ♗g7?!

Also here, Black could wait by 29...♕e7!?, preserving the idea of meeting 30 ♘d3?! with 30...♘g4.

30 ♘d3! *(D)*

B



White's pawns are ready to go forward.

30...♘xg3

This counter-sacrifice gives Black some practical chances, but objectively it is not sufficient.

31 e5!?

The simple 31 hxg3 ♕xg3 32 ♘f2 (32 ♗e5 ♕h4) is also good for White, when the attempt 32...♗h3!? results in a difficult endgame for Black after 33 ♘xh3 ♘g4 34 ♘f2 ♕h2+ 35 ♔f1 ♖f8 36 ♖e2 ♗xc3 37 ♕xc3! ♖af6 38 ♖bb2 ♕h4 39 ♕h3! ♖xf2+ 40 ♔g1 ♕xh3 41 ♗xh3 ♖xe2 42 ♖xe2 ♘e5 43 ♖b2.

31...♘gh5 32 d6! ♕d8 33 ♘xc5!

After 33 ♗xb7!? ♗xb7 34 ♖xb7 Black could try 34...♘d7 35 ♕b5 ♕g5+ 36 ♔h1 ♕f5 37 ♕xd7 ♕f3+ 38 ♔g1 ♖aa8.

33...♖xd6

The simplest refutation of 33...♖xa5 34 ♘xb7 ♗xb7 35 ♖xb7 ♘g4 is probably 36 d7 ♖f8 37 h3.

34 exd6 ♖xe1+ 35 ♗xe1 ♘e4 *(D)*

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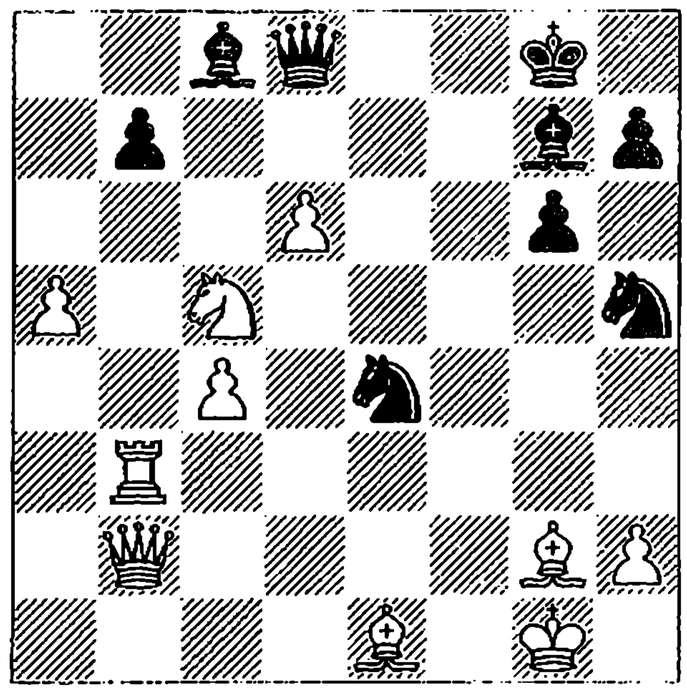


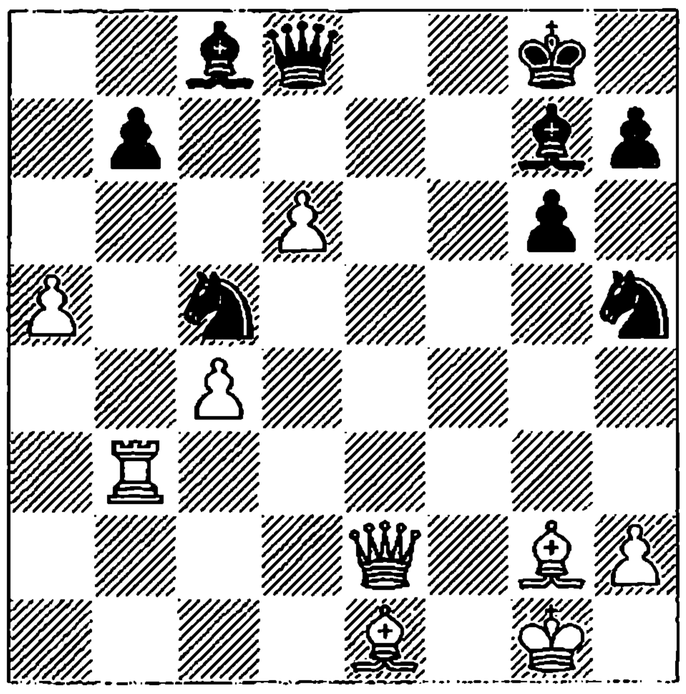
36 ♕e2!?

36 ♘xb7?! ♗xb7 is not so clear, but the queen sacrifice 36 ♕xg7+!? ♔xg7 37 ♘xe4 ♘f4 38 ♗c3+ ♔f7 39 ♗f3 was a good alternative to the text-move.

36...♘xc5? *(D)*

A decisive mistake in mutual time-trouble. Necessary was 36...♗d4+ 37 ♔h1 ♘xc5 38 ♗d5+ ♔g7 (38...♔f8? 39 ♖f3+!) 39 ♕e7+ ♕xe7 40 dxe7 ♘f6 with an inferior but not absolutely hopeless endgame.

W



37 ♗d5+ ♔f8

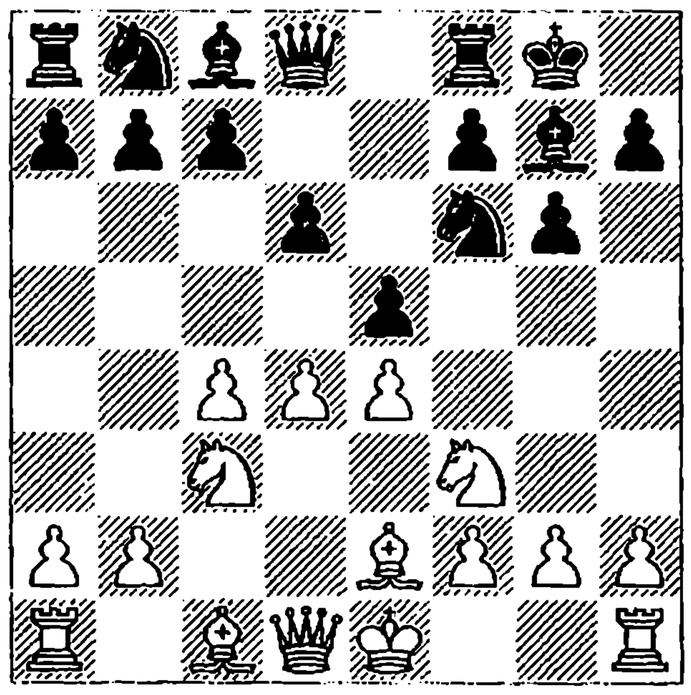
Or 37...♔h8 38 ♕e7! ♕xe7 39 dxe7 ♘f6 40 ♖f3 and White wins.

38 ♕f2+ ♗f5 39 ♕xc5 ♕g5+ 40 ♖g3 1-0

An excellently played game by my opponent, who is one of the most promising Ukrainian juniors.

3 Classical: 7 0-0 and 7 ♗e3

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 5 ♘f3 0-0 6 ♗e2 e5 *(D)*



W

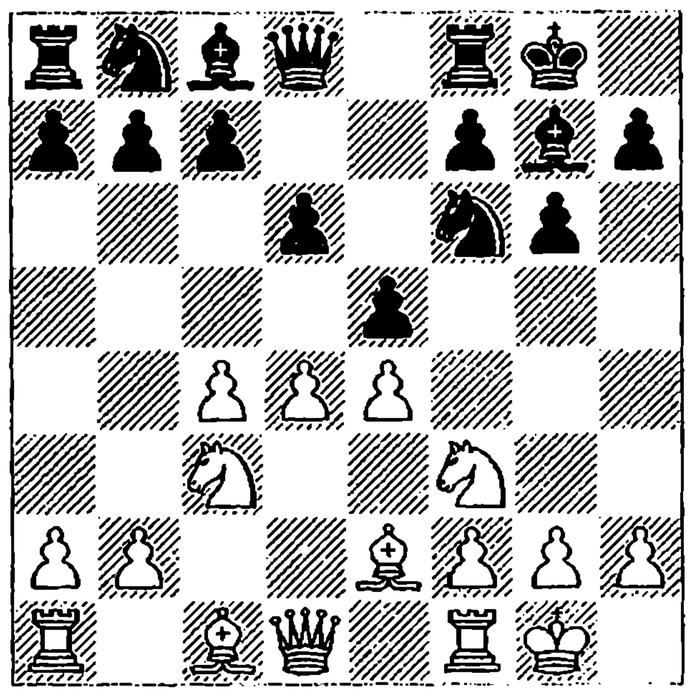
In this chapter, we shall consider both sides' deviations from the main line after 7 0-0 and the most topical alternative to 7 0-0, i.e. 7 ♗e3.

These lines often intersect, which has a simple explanation: 7 ♗e3 works especially well against 7...♘c6?! (Black's main move after 7 0-0), which is answered by 8 d5! ♘e7 9 ♘d2, and all White's pieces are placed optimally. Practice has shown that Black has a difficult life in this line, and therefore he normally responds to 7 ♗e3 in other ways. There is a wide choice. Black's most forcing answer is 7...♘g4. In lines with 7...♘bd7 and 7...♘a6 White's options are a bit narrower in comparison with 7 0-0 (though, as 8 ♗e3 is one of the main answers after both 7 0-0 ♘bd7 and 7 0-0 ♘a6, the 7 ♗e3 move-order does not really damage White's chances in these cases).

The other important moves for Black after 7 ♗e3, 7...exd4, 7...h6!? and 7...c6, are also, each in their own way, aiming at exploiting the 'premature' development of the bishop. Taking into account the number of serious options available to Black, it is easy to see that White's preparation if he wishes to play 7 ♗e3 requires quite serious work. Nevertheless, at grandmaster level quite a lot of players in recent years have been tempted by the possibility of avoiding the 7 0-0 ♘c6 8 d5 ♘e7 labyrinth. (Even the author has used 7 ♗e3 for White on several occasions, but the fact that Kasparov used 7 ♗e3 several times throughout his career is a more serious argument.) I shall share with readers my experience and opinions about all of Black's main moves after 7 ♗e3 (with the possible exception of 7...♕e7, which was once famously used by Kasparov against Karpov, but now occurs rarely), but please do not ask me which of Black's moves after 7 ♗e3 is ultimately best. I can only say that I regard 7...♘g4 as possibly the most critical.

Game 13
Itkis – Golubev
Romanian Superliga (Sovata) 2000

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 5 ♘f3 0-0 6 ♗e2 e5 7 0-0 *(D)*



B

7...♘c6

The most important of Black's alternatives is 7...♘a6 – a move that was almost unknown until Igor Glek began to use it in 1988. From that point on, the early ...♘a6 became a popular idea for Black in many lines of the King's Indian. After 7...♘a6 White, as a rule, chooses between 8 ♖e1 c6 9 ♗f1 (which we won't examine) and 8 ♗e3 (the latter move leads to a line which will be examined in this chapter via the move-order 7 ♗e3 ♘a6 8 0-0).

In the 1990s Glek started to develop more extravagant ideas, such as 7...a5!? and 7...exd4 8 ♘xd4 ♖e8 9 f3 ♘c6!? (in the latter line White usually plays 10 ♗e3, which results in a position we shall consider in the next game).

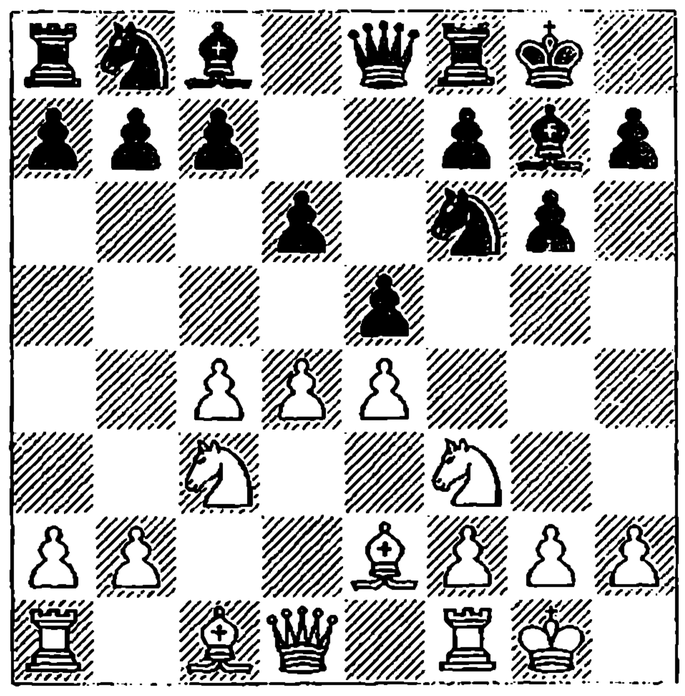
In my own games, I have usually been happy to play the 7...♘c6 main line, and only in particular games experimented with the other continuations (after all, one cannot always feel fully prepared for the 7...♘c6 8 d5 ♘e7 stuff).

a) 7...♘bd7 is the oldest of Black's moves. This system of development is a bit passive but is certainly not unplayable. Now 8 d5 makes Black's life easier because he can continue with 8...♘c5 (attacking the e4-pawn) and 9...a5. So, usually White keeps the tension in the centre – by 8 ♖e1, or in two other ways:

a1) 8 ♗e3 (this position also occurs via 7 ♗e3 ♘bd7 8 0-0) 8...♕e7 (a relatively rare move) 9 dxe5 (9 d5!?, and if 9...♘g4 then 10 ♗g5, seems to be a more promising way to fight for an advantage) 9...dxe5 10 ♘d5 ♕d8 11 ♕c2 (11 ♘d2 c6 12 ♘c3 ♕e7 is approximately equal; then 13 ♕a4 h5 14 f3?! h4 15 ♖fd1 ♘h5 16 c5 ♘f4 allowed Black to develop a strong initiative in Grooten-Golubev, Belgian Cht 1997/8) 11...♘h5!? 12 c5 c6 13 ♘c3 ♘f4 with sufficient counterplay for Black, Sakaev-Golubev, Biel open 1994.

a2) 8 ♕c2 cxd4 (an important alternative is 8...c6 9 ♖d1 ♕e7 10 d5 c5 11 ♗g5! h6 and now 12 ♗h4 or 12 ♗d2!? ♘e8 13 g3! f5 14 ♘h4 ♕f7 15 exf5 gxf5 16 f4 with better prospects for White) 9 ♘xd4 ♖e8 (or 9...♘c5 10 ♖d1 and now 10...a5 allows the typical 11 ♘db5!, fixing the c7-pawn and making it hard for Black to carry out any sensible plan of counterplay, Durnopianov-Golubev, Kharkov jr 1984) 10 ♖d1 ♘c5 11 f3. It is quite hard for Black to find realistic targets for attack and develop some activity that might make up for his strategically inferior pawn-structure. Chuchelov-Golubev, USSR Army Cht (Leningrad) 1989 continued 11...♘h5 12 ♗f1 ♘e6 and now instead of helping Black by 13 ♘xe6 ♗xe6 14 g4?! ♘f6 15 c5 ♘d7 16 cxd6 ♘e5 17 ♕f2 cxd6 18 ♗e3 f5 19 exf5 gxf5 with mutual chances, White could think about 13 ♗e3!?.

b) 7...♕e8!? *(D)*.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This odd-looking move started to appear almost simultaneously with 7...♘a6. Nowadays only two grandmasters, Zakharevich and Kempinski, employ it regularly.

b1) Black's point is that 8 ♖e1?! allows him to equalize by 8...exd4! because 9 ♘xd4?! ♘xe4! 10 ♘d5 ♕d8 11 ♗f3 ♘xf2! is not good for White, Van Wely-Kempinski, Bundesliga 2003/4.

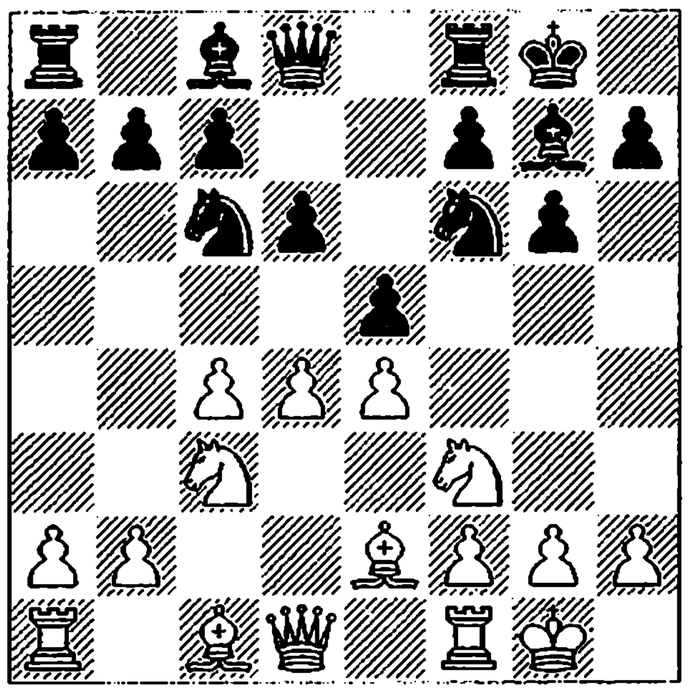
b2) 8 d5 is possible, but hardly the most critical – then Zakharevich always plays 8...♘fd7!?, preparing ...f5.

b3) 8 dxe5 dxe5 9 ♗e3 (a good alternative is 9 b4 ♕e7 10 b5 c6 11 ♕b3!) 9...♘a6 10 h3 (10 ♘d2 is a major alternative) 10...b6 11 a3 ♗b7 (11...♘c5!? is an idea that has been developed by Tkachev and Kazhgaleev) 12 ♕c2 ♘h5 13 ♖fe1 (13 b4!? is more principled {M.Gurevich-V.Milov, Brussels open 1995}, with the idea 13...♘f4 14 c5) 13...♘f4 14 ♗f1 ♘e6 15 ♖ad1 ♘b8 (after 15...c5!? Black can hardly be significantly worse) 16 b4 ♘c6 17 c5 ♘cd4 (Black has accomplished his main strategic plan, but such an achievement does not always solve his problems entirely) 18 ♗xd4 exd4 19 ♘b5! bxc5 20 bxc5 ♕d7 21 ♗c4 ♘xc5 22 ♘bxd4 ♗xe4 (22...♕a4 23 ♗xf7+!) 23 ♖xe4 ♘xe4 24 ♕xe4 c5 25 ♕c6! ♖fd8 26 ♕xc5 ♖ac8 27 ♕b4 a5 28 ♕b3 a4 29 ♕a2 ♕a7 30 ♗d5! ♗f6 and Black's piece activity can hardly constitute full compensation for his material disadvantage, Deich-Golubev, USSR Army Cht (Leningrad) 1989.

We now return to 7...♘c6 *(D)*.

8 dxe5

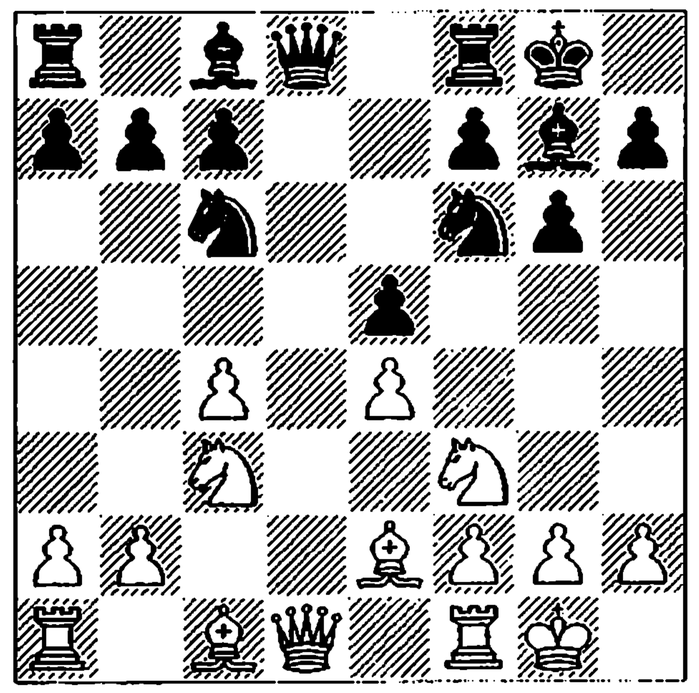
This deviation from the principal direction (8 d5 ♘e7) is not really dangerous for Black. More often White tries 8 ♗e3, when 8...cxd4 9 ♘xd4 ♖c8 10 f3 directly transposes to one of Glek's pet variations (see the next game), but two other continuations are more solid for Black:



a) 8...♖e8!? (very sound, though a little drawish) 9 dxe5 (on 9 d5, 9...♘d4! 10 ♘xd4 exd4 11 ♗xd4 ♘xe4 equalizes immediately, Reshevsky-Najdorf, Zurich Ct 1953) 9...dxe5 10 h3 (White can also play the endgame after 10 ♕xd8 ♘xd8 11 ♘b5 ♘e6 12 ♘g5 ♖e7! but no advantage has been found for him there; for example, 13 ♖fd1 b6! 14 c5 ♘xc5 15 ♖d8+ ♗f8 16 ♘xa7 ♖xa7 17 ♖xc8, which first occurred in Larsen-Fischer, Monte Carlo 1967, can be met by 17...♖e8 18 ♖xe8 ♘xe8 19 ♘f3 f6 with equality, Piket-Nunn, Wijk aan Zee 1990; note that 13 c5?! is wrong because of 13...♘d4!, a possibility which I unfortunately missed in Martynov-Golubev, USSR jr-Wch qual (Klaipeda) 1985) 10...♗e6 11 c5. Probably the best strategy for Black is now to ignore both ♘g5 and ♗b5 and continue 11...♘h5!? (11...h6 is a bit passive; then 12 ♕a4! ♕c8 13 ♖fd1 ♘h5!? 14 ♘d5 ♘f4 15 ♘xf4 exf4 16 ♗xf4 ♗xb2 17 ♖ab1 ♗g7 was slightly better for White in Ovseevich-Golubev, Ukrainian Ch (Simferopol) 1992) 12 ♘g5 ♘f4 13 ♘xe6 ♘xe6 14 ♗b5 ♖f8 15 ♗xc6 bxc6 (the doubled black pawns control the sensitive squares d5 and d6) 16 ♕a4 ♕e8! 17 ♖ad1 f5 18 exf5 gxf5 19 f3 ♔h8 20 ♔h1 ♖g8 21 ♖d2 ♗f6 and Black is not worse, Van der Sterren-Gelfand, Biel IZ 1993.

b) The most popular line is 8...♘g4 9 ♗g5 f6 10 ♗c1 (the alternative is 10 ♗h4, when Black's main option 10...g5 11 ♗g3 ♘h6 12 dxe5 fxe5!? is considered to be fully playable for him) 10...f5!? (10...exd4 11 ♘xd4 is slightly better for White; Sofrevski-Golubev, Skopje 1991 continued 11...♘xd4 12 ♕xd4 ♗e6 13 ♕d1!? f5 {if 13...♘e5, then 14 f4! ♘xc4 15 ♕b3 b5 16 ♘xb5 d5 17 ♖d1} 14 exf5 gxf5 15 ♘d5 with an obvious positional plus for White) 11 ♗g5 (or 11 d5 ♘e7 12 ♘g5 ♘f6 13 exf5 ♘xf5! and Black should be able to equalize, Farago-J.Polgar, Hungarian Ch 1991) 11...♕e8! 12 dxe5 dxe5 13 ♘d5 (or 13 h3 ♘f6 with sufficient counterplay for Black, I.Sokolov-Shirov, Las Vegas FIDE KO 1999) 13...♕f7 14 ♗d2 ♘f6 15 ♘g5 ♕d7 16 exf5 gxf5 17 f4 e4 18 ♗c3 h6 19 ♘xf6+ ♗xf6 20 ♕xd7 ♗xd7 21 ♗xf6 ♖xf6 22 ♖ad1 ♖d8 23 ♘h3 ♗e8!? 24 ♖xd8 ♘xd8 25 ♖d1 ♘e6 26 ♔f2 c5! with an approximately equal endgame, Vera-Van Wely, Matanzas 1994.

8...dxe5 *(D)*



9 ♗g5 ♕xd1 10 ♖fxd1 ♗g4

Probably this is more precise than 10...h6 11 ♗e3 (11 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 12 ♘d5 ♗d8 13 h3 ♖e8 14 c5 gives no advantage to White because of 14...♘d4! 15 ♘xd4 exd4 16 ♖xd4 c6 17 ♘c3 ♗f6 18 ♖a4 ♗xc3!? 19 bxc3 ♖e5 {Alexandrova-Motoc, Istanbul wom Ech 2003}, and if 20 ♖d1, then 20...♗e6 21 ♖b1 ♖xc5 22 ♖xb7 ♖xc3) 11...♗g4 12 h3 ♗xf3 13 ♗xf3 ♖fd8 14 ♘d5 ♘e8 (14...♘d4 is not convincing because of 15 ♘xc7 ♖ac8 16 ♘b5!; 14...♘xd5 followed by 15...♘d4 also would not give Black total equality) and here, instead of 15 ♗e2?! ♘d4 16 ♗xd4 exd4 17 c5 c6 18 ♘f4 ♘f6 19 f3 ♘d7 20 ♘d3 ♘e5 (Alexandrova-Golubev, Alushta 1999), White can gain some initiative by 15 c5! with the idea 15...♘d4 16 ♗xd4 exd4 17 c6!.

11 ♖d3

A more obvious continuation is 11 h3 ♗xf3 12 ♗xf3 ♘d4 13 ♘d5 ♘xd5 14 cxd5, when 14...f5!? gives Black equal chances (instead, 14...c6?! 15 dxc6! bxc6 16 ♖ac1 allows White to develop pressure).

11...h6!?

In case of 11...♗xf3 12 ♗xf3 (not 12 ♖xf3?! ♘d4 13 ♖xf6? h6!, and it is not Black but White

who will lose the material in the end) 12...♘d4, then in comparison with the 11 h3 line, White's ♖d3 may be considered a more useful move than h3.

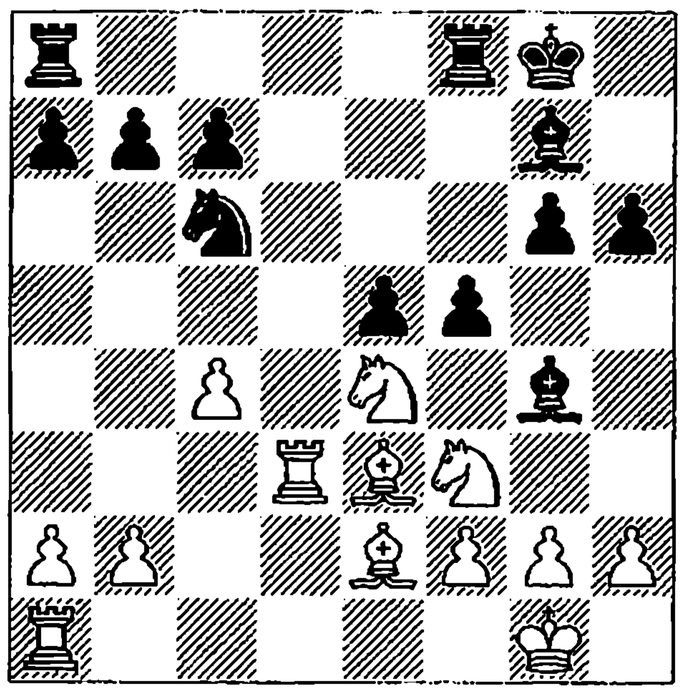
12 ♗e3

Not 12 ♗h4?! ♘h5!.

12...♘xe4!?

With the white rook on d3, this temporary knight sacrifice is possible. In previous games Black had opted for 12...♖fd8 13 ♖ad1 ♖xd3 14 ♖xd3.

13 ♘xe4 f5 *(D)*



White can move his knight from e4 in four ways, but it is unlikely that any of these moves can give him the better chances.

14 ♘c5

After 14 ♘g3?! e4 15 ♖d2 Black plays 15...f4! with the idea 16 ♗c5?! fxg3!.

Or 14 ♘c3 e4 15 ♖d2 exf3 (here 15...f4? 16 ♗c5 favours White) 16 gxf3 f4! (16...♗h5 17 ♘d5 with the ideas ♘xc7 and ♘f4) 17 ♗c5 ♗xc3 (17...♖f5!?) 18 bxc3 ♖f5 ½-½ Perun-S.Pavlov, Kiev open 2004. Black is not worse in this position.

Black also need not fear 14 ♘ed2 e4 15 ♖b3 exf3 16 gxf3 (or 16 ♗xf3 ♗xf3 17 ♘xf3 ♘a5!) 16...♗h5!? (avoiding 16...♗h3 17 f4!?) 17 ♖xb7 f4 18 ♗c5 ♖fb8!.

14...e4 15 ♖b3 exf3

Black could choose 15...f4!? 16 ♘xe4 fxe3 17 ♖xe3 (17 fxe3 ♘a5! 18 ♖b5 b6) and now, say, 17...♖ae8 or 17...♗f5 with sufficient compensation for the pawn.

16 gxf3 f4 17 fxg4 fxe3 18 fxe3 ♘d4

This move leads to an almost sterile position. 18...♖ae8!? 19 ♖f1 b6 would have preserved more tension.

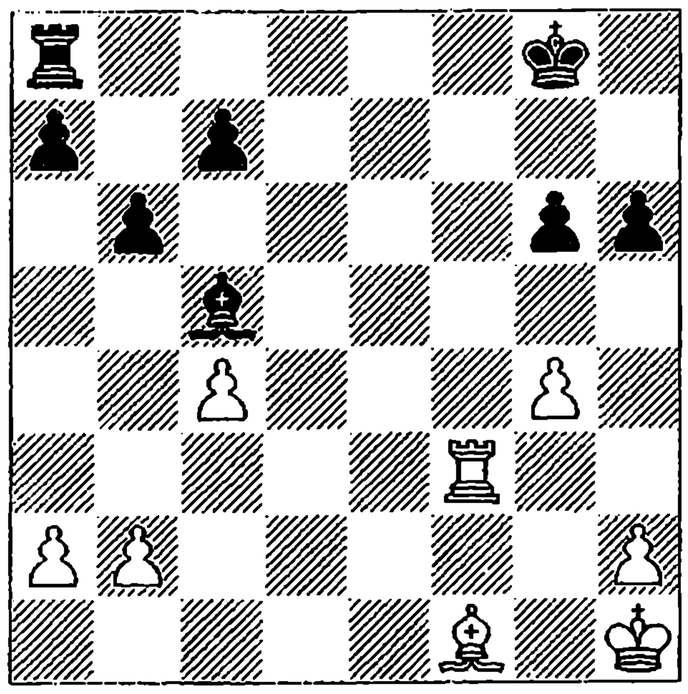
19 exd4 ♗xd4+ 20 ♔h1 ♗xc5 21 ♖f1

A practical decision. Grabbing the pawn by 21 ♖xb7!? might look risky, but perhaps Black has nothing special there and the position is dynamically balanced; for example, 21...♖f2!? (no better is 21...♖ae8 22 ♗d3! or 21...♖ad8 22 ♖xc7) 22 ♖xc7 (22 ♗d3 ♖d8! with the initiative) 22...♖xe2 23 ♖xc5 ♖d8! 24 ♖d5 ♖f8 25 ♖ad1 ♖ff2 26 ♖d8+ ♔f7 with an inevitable draw.

21...♖xf1+

After 21...♖ae8 22 ♖xf8+ ♔xf8 White plays 23 ♗d3!, and two black pawns are attacked.

22 ♗xf1 b6 23 ♖f3! *(D)*



White is a bit worse, but (in a competition with a classical time-limit!) he does not really risk losing.

23...♖e8 24 ♗d3 ♖e1+

Or 24...♔g7 25 ♔g2 ♖e1 26 ♖f1 ♖e3 27 ♖f3.

25 ♖f1 ♖xf1+ 26 ♗xf1 ♔f7 27 ♔g2 ♔f6 28 h4 ♔e5 29 ♗d3 ♔f4

After 29...g5 30 hxg5 hxg5 31 ♔f3 ♗d4 32 b3 ♗c5 Black is likely to win a pawn on the queenside, but 33 ♗e4 ♔d4 34 ♗c6 ♔c3 35 ♔e4 ♔b2 36 ♔d3! ♔xa2 37 ♔c2 is still a dead draw.

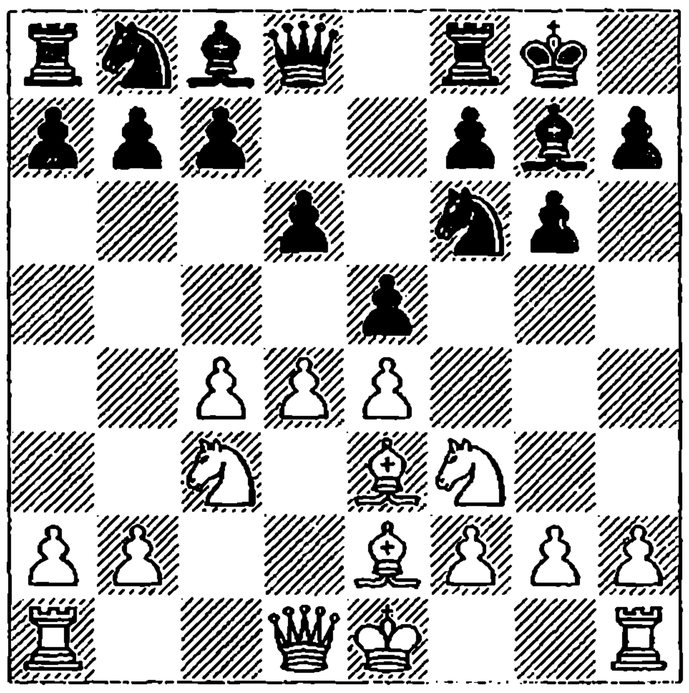
30 ♗xg6 ♔xg4 31 h5 ♔f4 32 ♔f1 ♔e3 33 ♔e1 ♔d4 34 ♗f7 ♔d3 35 ♔d1 ♗e3 ½-½

Game 14
Åkesson – Golubev
Leuven open 1994

1 ♘f3 d6 2 d4 ♘f6 3 c4 g6 4 ♘c3 ♗g7 5 e4 0-0 6 ♗e2 e5 7 ♗e3 *(D)*

7...exd4

Black's idea is clear: he opens the e-file and attacks White's pawn on e4. It is hard for White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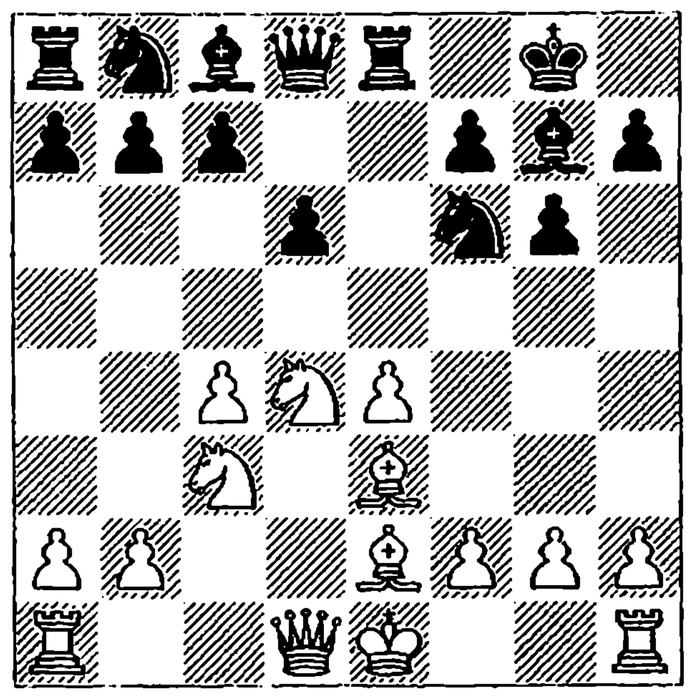
to do without f3, after which the position of the bishop on e3 can become a bit vulnerable. Still, after active discussions in the 1990s, White found ways to keep some advantage in the major lines after 7...exd4 and the top players have switched to other continuations – as they always do when they do not see clear equality or, at least, a 'clear lack of clarity'. Still, no chess assessments are written in stone and, in any case, at lower levels it is much more important to surprise your opponent, or at least to play the kind of position which you like and understand.

On a separate note, Black can try to prepare ...exd4 by 7...c6!?. The idea of this move-order is to avoid the line 7...exd4 8 ♘xd4 ♖e8 9 f3 c6 10 ♗f2! (which will be discussed below). So, if after 7...c6 White plays 8 0-0 or 8 ♕d2, then Black replies with 8...exd4 and 9...♖e8, where he is theoretically OK. White's main answer to 7...c6, however, is 8 d5!, which usually leads to a very closed positions with somewhat better chances for him. Black's main choice is between two moves:

a) 8...♘a6 9 0-0 (after 9 ♘d2!? Black can seek counterplay by 9...♘e8 10 0-0 f5 and if 11 f3, then 11...f4 12 ♗f2 c5 13 a3 b6 14 b4 h5 as in San Segundo-Topalov, Madrid 1996) 9...♘g4 10 ♗g5 f6 11 ♗h4 c5 (after 11...h5 12 h3 ♘h6 White may try 13 c5!? ♘xc5 14 b4, an idea which was introduced by Shulman) 12 ♘e1! with a complex situation that somewhat favours White; e.g., 12...h5 13 h3 ♘h6 14 a3 ♘f7 15 ♘d3 ♗h6 16 b4 with an initiative for White, Topalov-Ki.Georgiev, New Delhi FIDE KO 2000.

b) 8...♘g4 9 ♗g5 f6 (9...♕b6?! wins a pawn by a double attack, but this operation is highly risky because after 10 0-0 ♕xb2 11 ♘a4 ♕b4 12 ♗d2 ♕a3 13 ♖b1 his queen is in danger, Mchedlishvili-Doettling, Tallinn U-18 Ech 1997) 10 ♗h4 h5! (10...c5 11 0-0 ♘h6 12 ♘e1 ♘d7 13 ♖b1 b6 14 a3 leads to a typical slight advantage for White, Topalov-Kramnik, Las Palmas 1996; after 10...♘a6, as played in Karpov-Kasparov, New York/Lyons Wch (19) 1990, apart from quiet continuations White may try the sharp 11 c5!? dxc5 12 ♗xa6 bxa6 13 dxc6 ♗e6 14 ♕a4 ♖c8 15 ♘d5 ♕e8 16 ♖c1! {Volkov-Kotronias, Korinthos 2000} with better chances because 16...♗xd5?! 17 exd5 e4 is answered by 18 0-0! exf3 19 ♕xg4) 11 ♘d2 (the idea of Black's 10th was to create the threat of 11...g5 and thereby prevent White's regrouping by 0-0 and ♘e1) 11...♘h6 12 f3 c5. To my mind, even here (as in the whole 7...c6 8 d5 line) Black is a bit passive, but GM Zdenko Kožul has played this position as Black at least three times, so this is definitely a matter of taste.

8 ♘xd4 ♖e8 *(D)*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9 f3!

Another way to defend the pawn, 9 ♕c2, seldom occurs. Then 9...c6! 10 0-0 ♕e7! 11 f3 d5 seems to be the most precise reaction. Shirov-Topalov, Dortmund 1996 continued 12 cxd5 cxd5 (12...♘xd5!? is also possible) 13 ♗d3 ♘a6!? 14 a3 ♗d7 15 ♖fe1 dxe4 16 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 17 ♗xe4 ♖ac8 18 ♕f2 ♘c5 with a balanced position.

9...♘c6!?

Current theory says that the most natural move, 9...c6 (which prepares ...d5), should be answered by 10 ♗f2! (10 0-0 is innocuous in view of 10...d5 11 cxd5 ♘xd5! 12 ♘xd5 cxd5 13 ♕b3 ♘c6 14 ♖ad1 ♘xd4 15 ♗xd4 ♗xd4+ 16 ♖xd4 ♕f6 =; 10 ♕d2 is not the most precise either due to 10...d5 11 exd5 cxd5 12 0-0 ♘c6

and now after 13 ♖ad1 Black equalizes by 13...♘xd4 14 ♗xd4 dxc4 15 ♗xc4 ♗e6 16 ♗b5 ♖f8 17 ♕f2 ♕a5 18 ♕h4 ♘h5, while 13 c5 allows the famous exchange sacrifice 13...♖xe3!! 14 ♕xe3 ♕f8, which first occurred in Karpov-Kasparov, New York/Lyons Wch (11) 1990 and gives Black sufficient counterplay). Now 10...d5 11 exd5 cxd5 12 c5 (or 12 0-0 ♘c6 13 c5) 12...♘c6 13 0-0 ♘h5 14 ♕d2 ♗e5 15 g3! results in the key position of this variation, where Black experiences problems with his isolated d-pawn, but still has significant resources. 15...♘g7 (15...♗h3 16 ♖fe1 ♘g7 17 ♖ad1 ♖c8?! 18 ♘db5! a6 19 ♘d6 ♗xd6 20 cxd6 gave White a serious advantage in Kasparov-Carlsen, Reykjavik rpd 2004) 16 ♖fd1 *(D)* and here:

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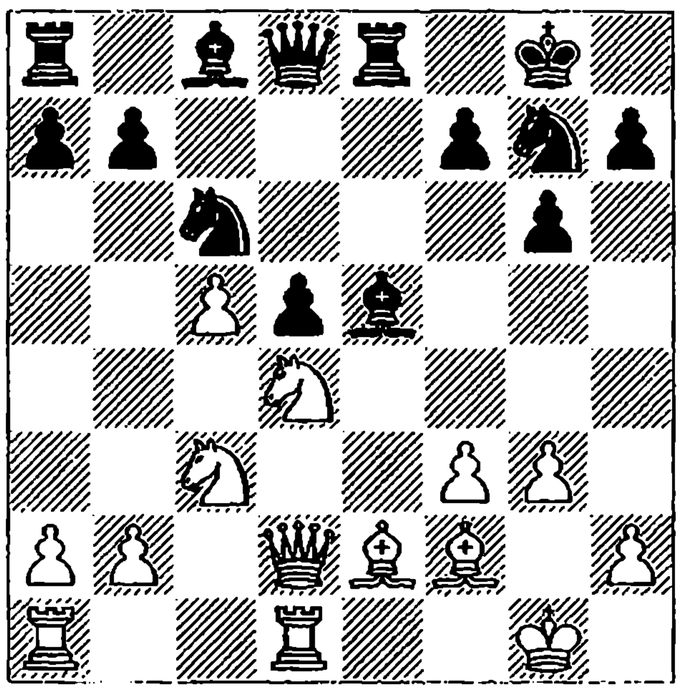


a) 16...♘e6 17 ♘xe6! (17 ♘b3 ♘g5! gives counterchances; 17 ♘db5 can lead to double-edged play after 17...a6 18 ♘d6 ♗xd6 19 cxd6 d4 20 ♘d5!? ♔g7! 21 f4 ♕xd6 22 ♗f3 ♗d7 23 g4 ♖ad8 24 ♗g3 ♘c7 25 f5 ♘e5) 17...♗xe6 18 f4! ♗xc3 19 ♕xc3 ♗f5 and here the active 20 ♗c4! ♗e4 21 b4!, as in Khuzman-Balcerak, Biel open 2000, seems to ensure an initiative for White. It is difficult for Black either to stop the b5 advance or to find a good placement for his knight after b5.

b) 16...a6, protecting the b5-square, is reasonable, but then White can fully consolidate by 17 ♗f1 ♗e6 18 ♘ce2!? ♘f5 19 ♗g2 with some advantage, G.Georgadze-Nataf, Benasque 1998.

c) 16...♗e6 17 ♘xe6 ♘xe6 (17...fxe6 18 f4 ♗f6 19 ♘b5 with the idea 20 ♘d6, which first occurred in Khalifman-Akopian, Las Vegas FIDE Wch (4) 1999, gives White an initiative) 18 ♕xd5 ♗xc3 19 bxc3 (19 ♕xd8?? ♘exd8!) 19...♕f6! and the black knights are able to fight against the white bishops, Markus-Volokitin, Bosnian Cht (Neum) 2005.

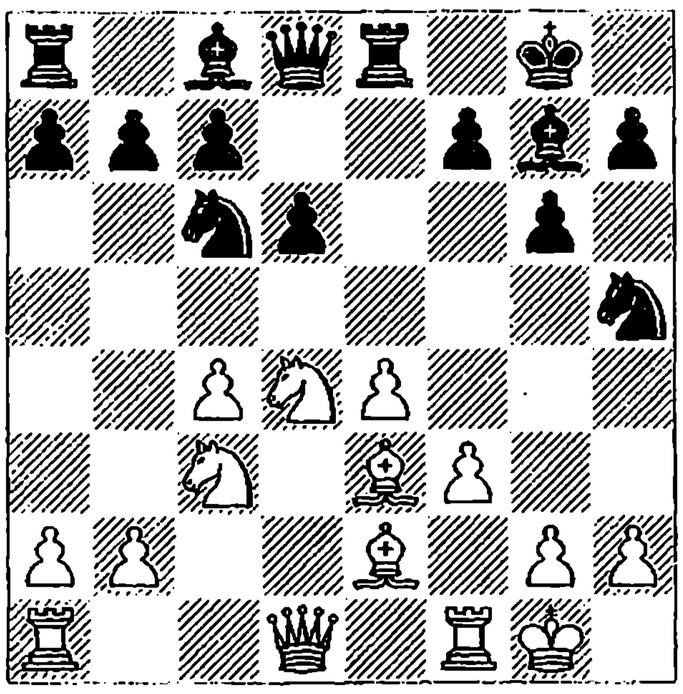
10 0-0

For some reason, the idea 10 ♕d2 ♘h5 11 ♗g5!? f6 12 ♘xc6 bxc6 13 ♗h6 ♗xh6 14 ♕xh6 ♖b8 15 0-0-0 ♕e7 16 g4 ♘g7 with a complex position, possibly a bit better for White (Khalifman-Topalov, Linares 1995), has found almost no followers amongst white players.

The position after 10 0-0 can also arise from 7 0-0 exd4 8 ♘xd4 ♖e8 9 f3 ♘c6!? 10 ♗e3.

10...♘h5!? *(D)*

W



Glek's variation, which was also used in the mid-1990s by the young Russian stars Morozevich and Svidler. Black's way to fight against his opponent's solid centre may look extremely anti-positional, but in fact his pieces are very active and White should be very careful, and must avoid various tricks.

11 ♕d2

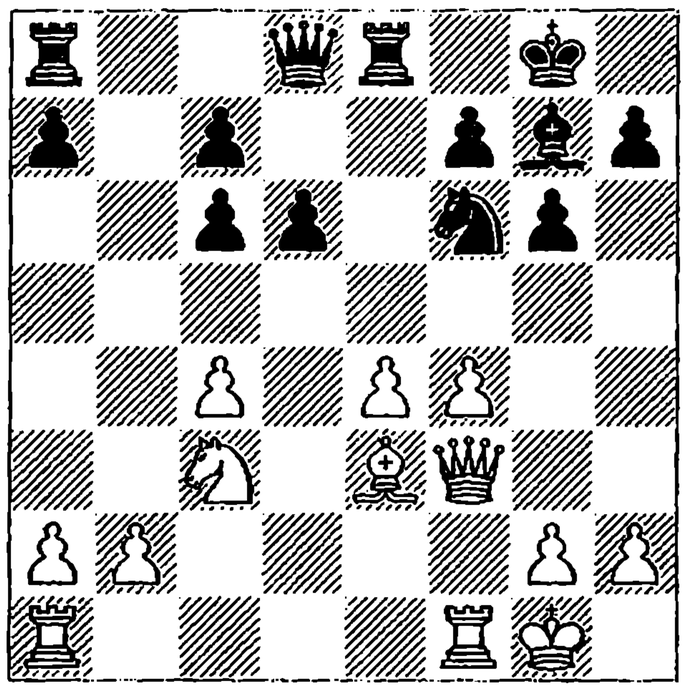
The most ambitious alternative is 11 f4 ♘f6 12 ♗f3 (12 ♘xc6 bxc6 13 ♗f3 allows Black to equalize by 13...♘xe4! 14 ♗xe4 d5!, Ruban-Glek, Russian Ch (Elista) 1995). Black has lost two tempi with his knight moves, but now may hope to create counterplay against the weakened e4-pawn:

a) The attempt to do so by directly 12...♗f5?! is refuted by 13 ♘xc6 bxc6 14 e5! dxe5 15 ♗xc6 ♘g4 16 ♗c5.

b) After 12...♘g4 13 ♗xg4 ♗xg4, rather than 14 ♕d2 ♘a5! with counterplay for Black, White should continue 14 ♘xc6 ♕d7 15 ♕d3 ♗xc3 16 ♘d4! ♗xb2 17 ♖ab1 c5 18 ♖xb2 cxd4 19 ♗xd4 with superior chances, Lobron-Glek, Bundesliga 1994/5.

c) 12...♗g4!? 13 ♘xc6 ♗xf3 14 ♕xf3 bxc6 *(D)*.

W



In this critical position no convincing way for White to prove an advantage has yet been found. 15 ♗d4 (or: 15 ♗f2 ♕c8!, Solozhenkin-Glek, Le Touquet 1994; 15 ♗d2 ♕b8! 16 b3 ♕b6+ 17 ♔h1 ♘xe4! 18 ♘xe4 ♕d4 and Black will regain the piece, Van der Sterren-Glek, Bundesliga 1994/5; 15 ♖ae1 ♕c8 16 ♗d4 transposes to 15 ♗d4 ♕c8 16 ♖ae1) 15...♕c8! (15...c5 16 ♗f2 ♕b8 is insufficient; White should then choose between 17 b3 and 17 ♖ae1!? ♕xb2 18 ♘b5 ♖ac8 19 ♘xa7; 15...♘xe4 16 ♗xg7 ♘d2 17 ♕d3 ♘xf1 18 ♗d4 ♘xh2 19 ♕g3!? is also promising for White) 16 ♖ae1 (or 16 ♖ad1 ♕g4 17 e5 dxe5 18 ♗xe5 ♕e6 19 b3 ♘g4 20 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 with a defensible position for Black, Karpov-Glek, Biel 1996) and here:

c1) 16...♕e6 17 b3 c5 18 f5!? gxf5 19 ♗xf6 occurred in Greenfeld-Svidler, Haifa 1996 and, according to Svidler, the most precise is now 19...♕xf6! 20 ♘d5 ♕d4+ 21 ♔h1 fxe4 22 ♕xf7+ ♔h8 23 ♕xc7 e3! 24 ♖e2 ♖f8 25 ♖fe1 ♖f2 26 ♖xe3 ♖af8 27 ♖e8 ♕e4! 28 ♖xf8+ ♗xf8 29 ♖g1 ♖xg2! with a draw by perpetual check.

c2) 16...♕g4 17 ♕f2 ♕e6 18 f5! gxf5 19 exf5 ♕xc4 (19...♕xe1 20 ♖xe1 ♘g4 does not give Black enough for the queen after 21 ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 22 ♕g3 ♗xd4+ 23 ♔f1 h5 24 ♘e2 – Greenfeld) 20 b3 ♕b4 21 a3! (White sacrifices a second pawn in order to remove the black queen from b4, where it creates serious obstacles for White's kingside play) 21...♕xa3! (according to both players' notes, 21...♕xb3?! 22 ♖b1 is even more dangerous for Black) 22 ♖a1 ♕b4 23 ♖a4 ♕b8! 24 ♕g3 ♔h8 25 ♘e4 (Greenfeld-Glek, Haifa 1996) and here Black should have played 25...♖xe4! 26 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 27 ♖xe4 ♕b6+ (or 27...♕b5) 28 ♔h1 ♖g8 with approximately equal chances – Greenfeld.

Another serious option for White is 11 ♘xc6 bxc6 12 ♕d2, when 12...f5 transposes to the text, but Black has additional possibilities such as 12...c5!?, as in Fridman-Glek, Bundesliga 2004/5.

We now return to the position after 11 ♕d2 *(D)*:

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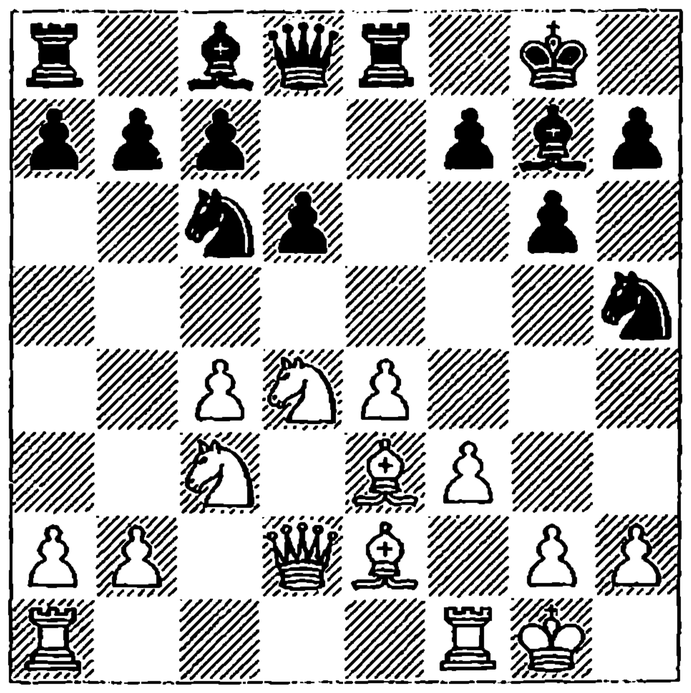


11...f5

Black also has ideas related with ...♘f4:

a) 11...♘xd4 12 ♗xd4 ♘f4 and now:

a1) 13 ♗xg7? ♕g5 forces White to defend by 14 ♔f2 (the only way to defend against both threats, 14...♕xg2# and 14...♘h3+ followed by capturing the queen) which is not attractive for him after 14...♔xg7.

a2) 13 ♔h1!? ♗e5 (after 13...♕g5 White can defend g2 by 14 ♖f2) 14 ♖ad1 ♘e6? (a strategic blunder; after the correct 14...♗e6 Black is not much worse) 15 ♗e3! (now Black is not able to stop f4, after which his knight will be totally misplaced on e6) 15...♗g7 16 f4 f5 17 exf5 gxf5 18 ♗h5! ♖f8 19 ♗f3 ♕f6 20 ♖fe1 ♔h8 21 ♖e2 a6 22 ♖de1 ♖b8 23 ♗a7! ♖a8 24 ♗f2 c6 25 ♕xd6 ♖d8 26 ♕a3 ♗f8 27 ♕a5 ♘xf4 28 ♗g3 ♘g6 29 ♗c7! ♖d4 30 ♖e8 ♖xc4 31 ♗e5 ♘xe5 32 ♕xe5 ♕xe5 33 ♖1xe5 ♔g7 34 ♖d8 ♗a3 35 ♘d1! 1-0 Krivoshei-Golubev, Nikolaev Z 1995 (a very disappointing game for me and, at the same time, a great performance by my opponent).

a3) Most often White plays 13 ♖fd1!? ♕g5 14 ♗f1 ♗xd4+ 15 ♕xd4 (as in Gavrikov-Dvoretsky, Bad Wiessee open 1997 and other games), when Black's active possibilities have expired and he must switch to a dull defence.

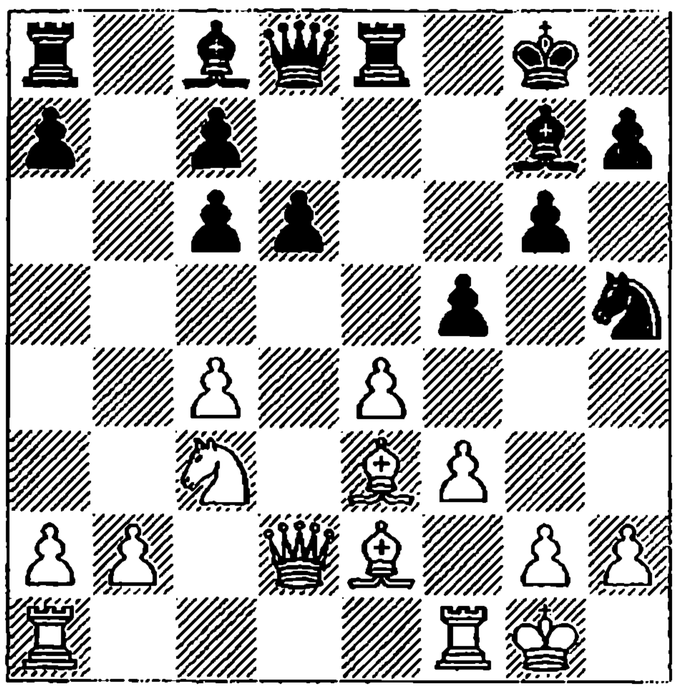
b) 11...♘f4 is also usually answered by 12 ♖fd1!? ♘xe2+ 13 ♘cxe2! ♘e5 14 b3 (Ivanchuk-Shirov, Erevan OL 1996), again with a

rather passive and slightly worse position for Black.

12 ♘xc6

Stronger than 12 exf5 ♖xe3! 13 ♘xc6 ♕e8! 14 ♘d4! ♘f4! 15 c5 (15 ♘e6? ♗xc3 16 ♕xe3 is nicely refuted by 16...♗d4!, winning the white queen) 15...♘xe2+ (not 15...♗xd4? 16 ♗c4+! followed by 17 ♕xd4) 16 ♘dxe2 ♗xf5 (Glek) 17 ♘e4 ♖xe2 18 ♕xe2 d5 and Black has sufficient compensation for the exchange.

12...bxc6 *(D)*

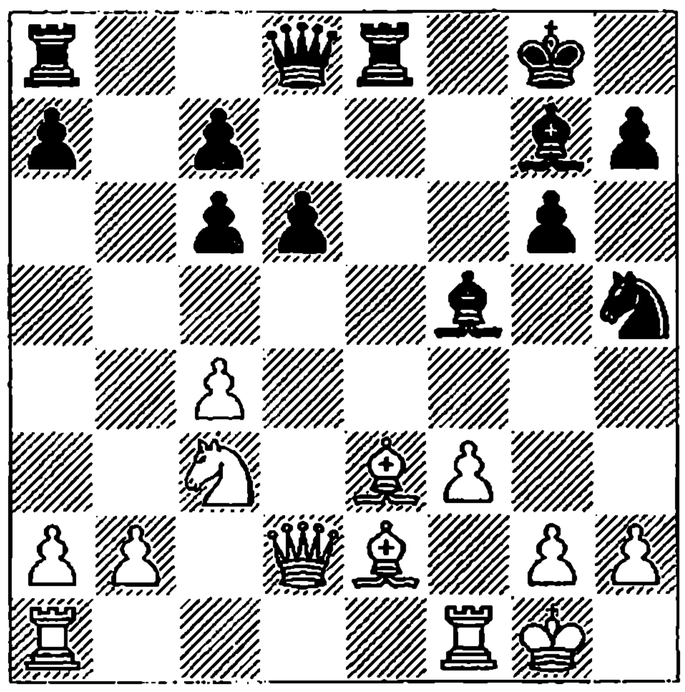


13 exf5

White has a wide choice here. The text is solid and the most popular move, but the most testing for Black is probably 13 c5!? d5 (after 13...f4 14 ♗f2 Black risks collapsing in the centre before he can create serious threats on the kingside) 14 ♗g5! (14 exd5 ♗xc3! 15 bxc3 ♕e7 16 ♔f2 ♕h4+ 17 ♔g1 ♕e7 is a draw, Piket-Nedev, Ohrid Ech 2001) 14...♕d7 (14...♗f6?! 15 ♗xf6 ♘xf6 16 exd5 gives White an obvious strategic advantage). The game P.H.Nielsen-Volokitin, Esbjerg 2002 continued 15 exf5?! gxf5 16 ♖fe1 ♕f7 and Black (who later won) retained resources for counterplay. Instead, White can attack the d5-pawn by 15 ♖ad1!, which must be answered by 15...♖b8! (other lines such as 15...d4 16 ♗c4+ ♔h8 17 ♘e2 are virtually hopeless for Black). Play may continue 16 exd5!? cxd5 17 ♘xd5 c6 (17...♖xb2 18 ♘f6+! ♗xf6 19 ♗c4+ ♔f8 20 ♗h6+ ♘g7 21 ♕xd7 ♗xd7 22 ♖xd7 ♖e7 does not seem to be sufficient for equality) 18 ♘e7+ ♖xe7 19 ♕e1 ♗d4+ (quite dangerous for Black is 19...♕e8 20 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 21 ♗c4+ ♔f8 22 ♕xe7+ ♔xe7 23 ♖fe1+ ♔f6 24 ♖e8 ♔g5, when White should avoid 25 ♖dd8?! ♖xb2 26 ♖xc8 ♘f4! with equality and try 25 ♗a6!? instead) 20 ♔h1 ♖e5 21 ♗c4+ ♔g7 22 ♕d2 f4! 23 ♗xf4 (unconvincing is 23 ♗h4 ♖xb2 24 ♕xd4 ♕xd4 25 ♖xd4 ♖xc5) 23...♘xf4 24 ♕xf4 and I am not quite sure that Black shall be able to hold this unpleasant position after either 24...g5 25 ♕xd4 ♕xd4 26 ♖xd4 ♖xb2 or 24...♖xb2 25 ♖xd4 ♕f5.

13...♗xf5 *(D)*

There is nothing better. 13...♕h4?! (threatening 14...♖xe3) 14 ♘e4!? (14 ♖ad1 ♗xf5 15 ♗g5 ♗d4+ 16 ♕xd4 ♕xg5 17 f4) 14...♖xe4 15 fxe4 ♗e5 16 h3! favoured White in S.Ernst-A.Horvath, San Agustin U-18 open 1998, while the trick 13...♗xc3? 14 ♕xc3 ♕e7 does not work here because after 15 ♗h6 ♕xe2? 16 ♖ae1 Black loses his queen.



14 ♗d4

In the case of 14 g4!? ♗xc3! 15 ♕xc3 ♕e7 16 ♗h6 (16 ♔f2 ♕h4+ 17 ♔g1 ♕e7 is a draw) 16...♕xe2 17 gxf5 (17 gxh5 ♕e5 is equal) Black should probably avoid the exchange of queens and continue 17...♕e7! 18 fxg6 hxg6 19 c5 d5 20 ♖ae1 ♕f7.

14 ♗g5? fails to 14...♗xc3! 15 bxc3 ♖xe2.

14...♗xd4+

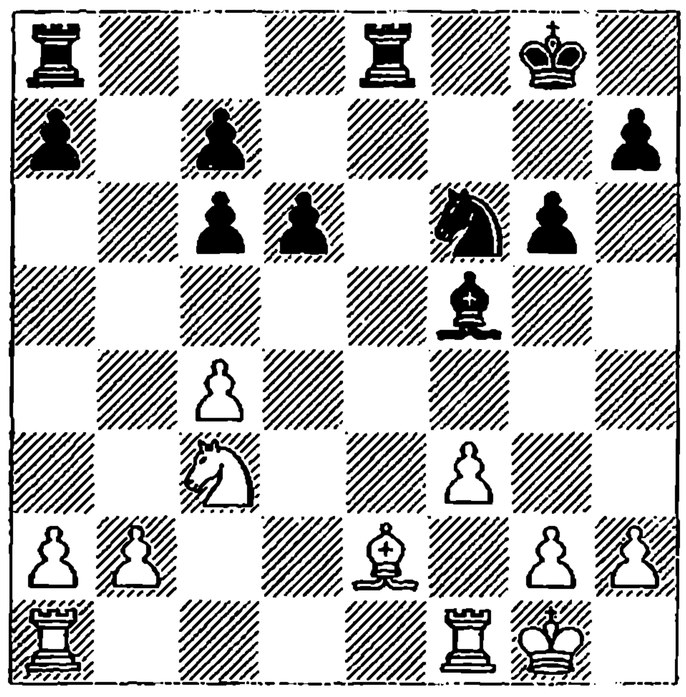
14...♗d3?! is a spectacular move, but then 15 ♗xg7 ♗xe2 16 ♘xe2 ♘xg7 17 ♖ae1 is clearly better for White because Black has slight weaknesses on both flanks.

14...♘f6!? does not solve all Black's problems: 15 ♖fe1 c5 16 ♗f2 ♕d7 17 ♖ad1 ♕f7 18 b3 with a small but stable advantage for White, Kramnik-Glek, Berlin ECC 1996.

15 ♕xd4 ♕f6 16 ♕xf6

If White avoids the exchange of queens by 16 ♕d2, then Black can develop some activity by 16...♕e5!, when 17 f4 is answered by 17...♕c5+ 18 ♔h1 ♘f6.

16...♘xf6 *(D)*



W

This endgame is slightly better for White. He has a pawn-majority on the kingside and may hope to make gradual progress there. At the same time, it is very difficult for Black to advance his d-pawn (this would immediately create many weaknesses in his camp) and otherwise Black's pawn-majority on the queenside can be used only for defensive purposes.

17 g4 ♗d7 18 ♔f2

It would have been more precise for White to play ♔f2 one move earlier (Kramnik's suggestion) or else to delay this move and play 18 ♖fe1! here. Now Black gets a chance to regroup his pieces.

18...♖f8

Threatening 19...♘xg4+.

19 ♔g3 ♖ae8 20 ♖ae1 ♖e3 21 ♘d1!? ♖e5

21...♘xg4!? deserved attention, sacrificing the exchange. It is hard, however, to be certain that Black gets sufficient compensation – White could try to insert 22 c5!? (instead of the immediate 22 ♘xe3 ♘xe3), when 22...♖e6? is wrong in view of 23 ♗c4 d5 24 fxg4 dxc4 25 ♖xf8+ ♔xf8 26 ♖xe6 ♗xe6 27 g5 followed by ♔f4-e5 with a dominating position.

22 ♗d3 ♖fe8 23 ♖xe5

23 ♔f2 is a better idea, preserving a small advantage.

23...♖xe5 24 h3 ♔f7 25 f4

Even here it would not be too late to play 25 ♔f2, planning 26 ♖e1 with a small plus for White.

25...♖e7 26 ♘c3 h5! 27 f5

Black also has no real problems after 27 g5 h4+! 28 ♔g2 ♘h5 29 ♖f3 ♘g3 or 27 ♗e2 hxg4 28 hxg4 ♖e3+. In both cases his active pieces help him to maintain the balance.

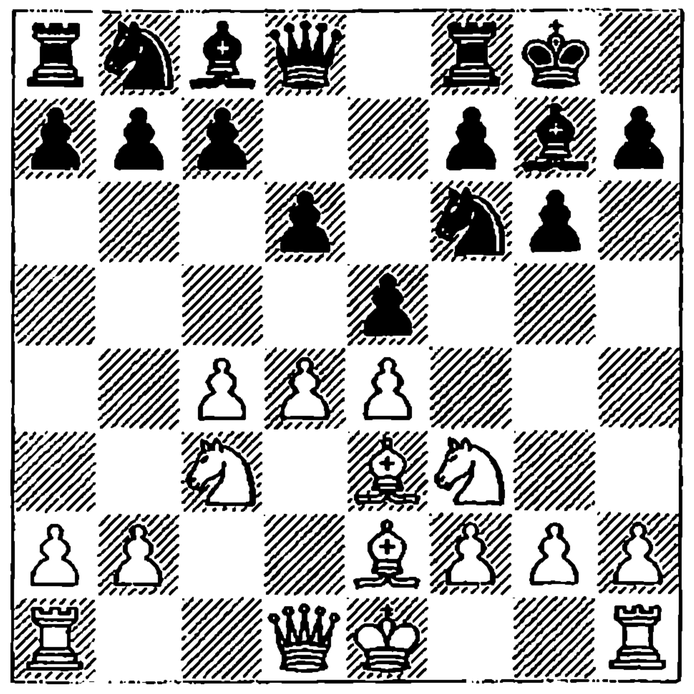
27...g5!

White's pawns are now blockaded on light squares. Certainly, this is a strategic achievement for Black.

28 b4 hxg4 29 hxg4 ♖e8 30 ♖f2 ½-½

Game 15
Sandipan – Golubev
Paris open 2004

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 5 ♘f3 0-0 6 ♗e2 e5 7 ♗e3 *(D)*



B

7...h6!?

This interesting move is a favourite of John Nunn, who, playing Black, twice drew with Kasparov in this line and scored a number of wins against other opponents. Black's most popular options against 7 ♗e3 are 7...♘a6 (which will be examined later) and 7...♘g4, the move that leads to the most complex play. After 8 ♗g5 Black should play 8...f6 (simply bad is 8...♗f6? 9 ♗xf6 ♕xf6 10 h3 ♘h6 11 g4, and 8...♕e8?! is not advisable in view of 9 ♘d5! ♕d7 10 h3 f6 11 hxg4 fxg5 12 dxe5 dxe5 13 ♘xg5 h6 14 ♘f3, Schutt-Alemanni, ICCF e-mail 2002) and now White should choose between two bishop retreats:

a) 9 ♗c1 is relatively rare, but not so innocuous. Now:

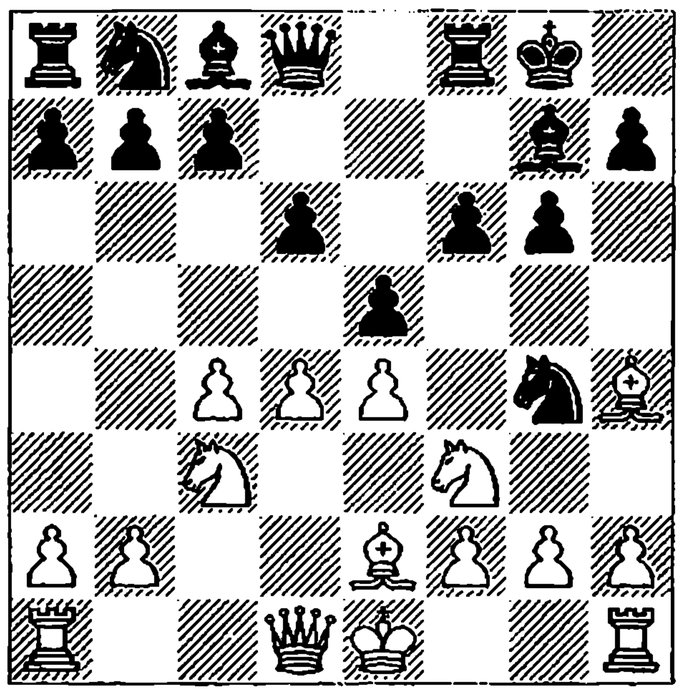
a1) Most often Black plays 9...♘c6 10 d5 ♘e7 (10...♘d4!? 11 ♘xd4 exd4 12 ♘b5 f5 13 0-0 ♘e5! 14 exf5 d3! 15 ♗xd3 ♘xd3 16 ♕xd3 ♗xf5 "with some compensation" – V.Mikhalevski) but lately he has started to experience some problems after 11 h3 ♘h6 12 h4! and then, for example, 12...♘f7 13 h5 f5 14 hxg6 ♘xg6 15 ♕c2.

a2) 9...f5!? is little-studied: 10 ♗g5 (10 h3? ♘xf2! 11 ♔xf2 fxe4! 12 ♘xe4 ♕h4+, Ivanchuk-Bologan, Edmonton 2005, with the idea 13 ♔e3? ♗h6+ 14 ♔d3 ♕xe4+! 15 ♔xe4 ♗f5+ 16 ♔d5 c6+ and Black mates soon) 10...♕e8.

a3) 9...exd4 10 ♘xd4 f5 11 h3 (also here 11 exf5? is a big mistake because Black has 11...♘xf2! 12 ♔xf2 ♕h4+; after 11 0-0 Black has equalized in a number of games by 11...fxe4 12 ♗xg4 ♗xg4 13 ♕xg4 ♗xd4 14 ♕xe4 ♘c6; also possible is 11 ♗xg4 fxg4 12 ♗e3, when 12...c6!? 13 ♕d2 ♖e8 14 ♘de2?! ♘d7! 15 ♖d1 ♘c5 16 b3 ♕a5 gave Black good play in Marcelin-Bologan, French Cht 2003) 11...♘h6 (more critical is 11...♘e5!?, as recently played by Radjabov against Ivanchuk) 12 ♗xh6 ♗xh6 13 exf5 ♗xf5 14 c5! ♘c6 15 ♘xf5 ♖xf5 16 cxd6 ♕xd6 17 ♕xd6 cxd6 18 0-0 with a small but lasting advantage for White in the endgame, Volkov-Efimenko, Moscow (Aeroflot) 2004.

b) The main line is 9 ♗h4 *(D)*, and here:

B



b1) 9...♘c6 10 d5 ♘e7 11 ♘d2 and then:

b11) 11...h5 12 h3 ♘h6 13 g4 hxg4 14 hxg4 ♘f7 was introduced with great success by Alexei Fedorov, but objectively, Black should have problems here because he cannot regroup by ...♗h6 and ...♔g7 too easily. 15 ♘f1 c5 was Azmaiparashvili-A.Fedorov, Elista OL 1998 and now Ponomariov suggested 16 ♕d3! ♗d7 17 ♕h3! ♖e8 18 ♕f3 ♘c8 19 ♘e3 a6 20 a4 with pressure for White.

b12) 11...♘h6 12 f3 and now:

b121) After 12...g5 13 ♗f2, the continuation 13...f5 14 h3! ♘g6 15 g4 fxg4 16 hxg4 gave somewhat better chances for White in a couple of games. Instead, in Golubev-T.Meszaros, Swiss open Ch (Scuol) 2001 Black played 13...♘g6 and after 14 g4 ♘f4 15 ♕b3 c5 16 ♘f1 ♘f7 17 ♘e3 ♕a5 18 h4 a6 19 h5 ♗d7 20 0-0 b5 21 cxb5 ♘xe2+ 22 ♘xe2 axb5 23 ♘g3 ♖fb8 24 a3 ♗f8 25 ♕d3 he could have got sufficient counterplay by 25...b4, instead of 25...♘d8?! 26 b4! cxb4 27 ♗e1. Perhaps I should have tried harder to prevent Black's queenside play instead of spending so many tempi hiding my king on the kingside.

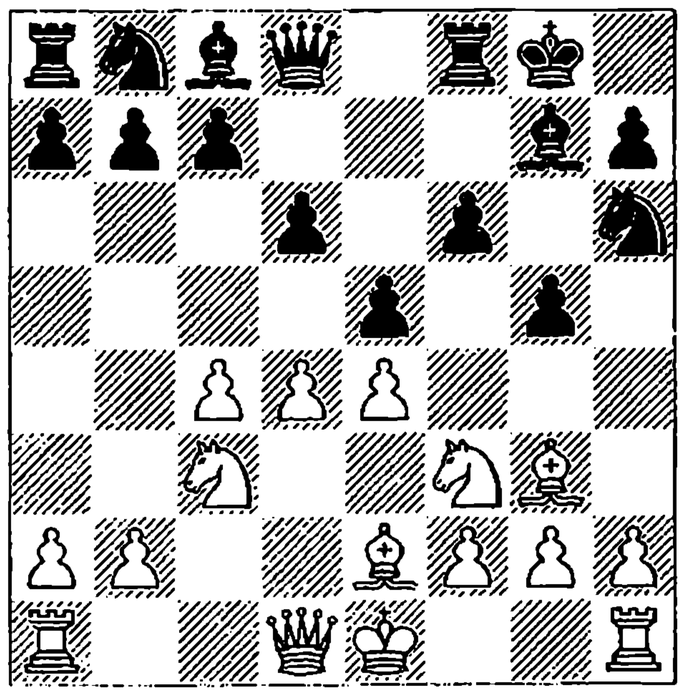
b122) 12...c5 and here:

b1221) 13 ♖b1 is a major option, and Boris Gelfand's favourite move. I do not intend to create the impression that this move is bad, and cite the game Ki.Georgiev-Nevednichy, Ohrid Ech 2001 just as a nice example of Black's creative play, which involved a typical exchange sacrifice in the true spirit of the King's Indian: 13...g5 14 ♗f2 f5 15 h3 ♘g6 16 g4 fxg4 17 hxg4 ♘h4 18 ♖h2 ♖f4 19 b4 b6 20 bxc5 dxc5 21 ♗e3 ♕f6! 22 ♗xf4 exf4 23 ♘b5 ♗d7 24 ♕b3 ♘f7 25 ♔d1 ♘e5 26 ♔c2 ♗xb5 27 cxb5 c4 28 ♕b4 ♖c8 29 ♖f2 h5! 30 gxh5 g4 31 fxg4 f3 32 g5 ♕xg5 33 ♕d6 fxe2 34 ♕e6+ ♔h7 35 ♕xc8? ♕e3 36 ♖xe2 ♕xe2 37 ♖g1 ♕d3+ 38 ♔d1 c3 39 ♖xg7+ ♔xg7 40 h6+ ♔h7 0-1.

b1222) 13 dxc6 bxc6 14 b4! brings us to an important and complex position, which is probably a bit better for White. If 14...d5!? (which Black has almost never chosen), then possibly 15 cxd5 cxd5 16 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 17 exd5 ♗b7 18 0-0 ♗xd5 19 ♗f2.

b2) 9...g5 10 ♗g3 ♘h6 *(D)* and now White has several options:

W



b21) 11 d5 ♘d7!? 12 ♘d2 f5 is a line very often played with Black by Nataf: 13 exf5 ♘f6 14 ♘de4 ♘xe4 15 ♘xe4 ♗xf5 16 ♗d3 g4! and Black is able to maintain the balance.

b22) 11 h3 is best answered by 11...exd4 12 ♘xd4 ♘c6. Instead, 11...♘c6 12 d5 ♘d4 13

♘xd4 exd4 14 ♕xd4 f5 15 ♕d2 f4 16 ♗h2 ♘f7 17 h4 h6 18 hxg5 hxg5 can hardly give Black sufficient compensation for the pawn, but White should not play 19 g3?!, as this allows a nice positional sacrifice of a second pawn by 19...f3! 20 ♗xf3 ♘e5 21 ♗e2 g4!, after which White's dark-squared bishop is firmly locked in his camp, Speelman-Kasparov, Madrid rpd 1988.

b23) 11 dxe5 (this is the most popular move) 11...dxe5 (after 11...fxe5 12 h4! g4 13 ♘h2 White will most likely win the g4-pawn, and it is not easy for Black to obtain sufficient compensation; at least, 13...♗e6 14 ♘d5 c6?! 15 ♘e3 ♕a5+ {Psakhis-Avrukh, Israeli Ch (Ramat Aviv) 2000} is not convincing in view of 16 ♔f1!) 12 0-0 ♗e6!? (12...c6 does not equalize: 13 ♕xd8! ♖xd8 14 ♖fd1, G.Georgadze-A.Kuzmin, Benasque open 1997) 13 h4 (13 ♕b3 ♕c8) 13...g4 14 ♘h2 ♕xd1 15 ♖fxd1 (15 ♖axd1 ♘c6 16 ♘d5 ♖f7 17 f3!? with unclear play) 15...♘c6 16 ♘d5 ♖f7 17 ♘e3 ♘d4 18 ♗xg4 ♘xg4 19 ♘hxg4 h5 20 ♘h2 ♗h6! with excellent compensation for the pawn, Yavakhishvili-Lahno, Calvia wom OL 2004.

We now return to 7...h6.

8 0-0

Other moves are considered to give White fewer chances to fight for the advantage:

a) 8 dxe5 ♘g4 (the move prepared by 7...h6 – now White does not have 9 ♗g5) 9 ♗c1 (9 cxd6 ♘xe3 10 fxe3 ♗xc3+! 11 bxc3 cxd6 is roughly equal, Gheorghiu-Golubev, Biel open 1992; also playable for Black is 9 ♗f4 ♘xe5 10 ♕d2 ♔h7 followed by ...♘bc6) 9...♘xe5 10 ♘d4 ♘bc6 11 ♘xc6 bxc6 12 0-0 c5 13 ♗e3 ♗c6 14 b3 ♘c6 15 ♕d2 ♕h4!? 16 ♖ae1 and now 16...♘d4?! 17 ♗xd4 cxd4 18 ♘b5 c5 19 f4! led to problems for Black in Burmakin-Sutovsky, Geneva open 2004, but 16...♖ae8 looks playable.

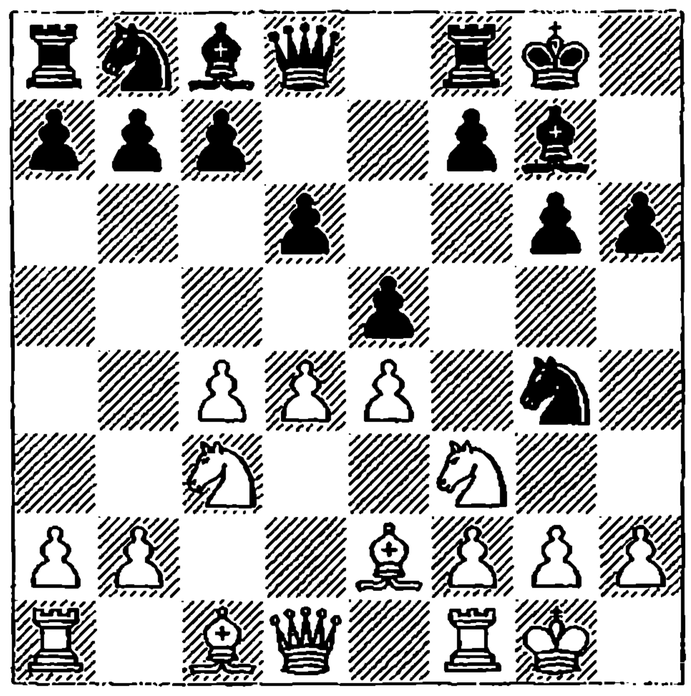
b) Or 8 d5 ♘g4 9 ♗c1 f5 10 g3!? (with the idea of playing 11 ♘h4) 10...fxe4 11 ♘xe4 ♘f6 12 ♘xf6+ ♕xf6 13 ♗e3 ♗h3! 14 ♘d2 ♘d7 15 ♗g4 ♗xg4 16 ♕xg4 ♕f5 with good play for Black, Yermolinsky-Shaked, New York open 1994.

8...♘g4

The rare 8...♘a6 can be answered by 9 ♘e1!?, as in Evseev-Loginov, Kazan 2005. Here V.Mikhalevski suggested 9...♘g4(!) but I suspect that after 10 ♗xg4 ♗xg4 11 ♕d2 ♔h7 White has an edge. One possible continuation is 12 f4!? and if 12...f5, then 13 h3 ♗h5 14 exf5 gxf5 15 ♘c2 e4 16 b4.

9 ♗c1 *(D)*

B



9...♘a6!?

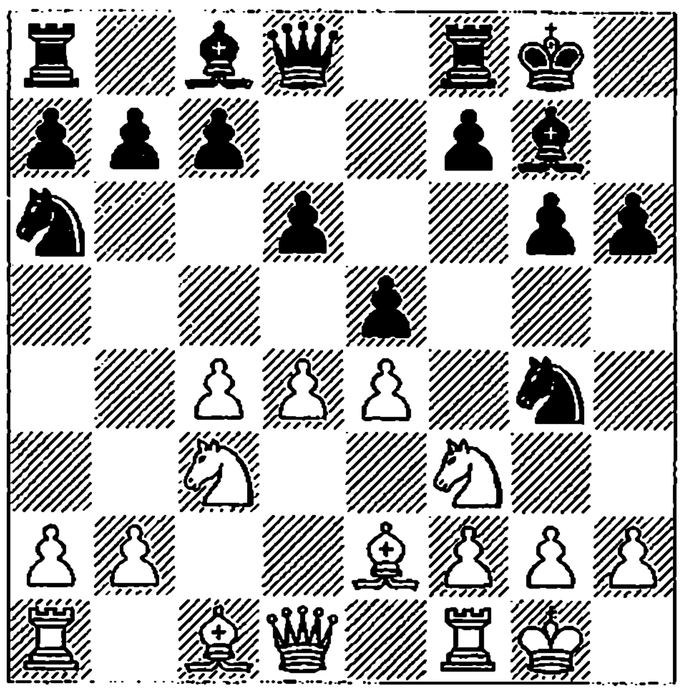
Also here, ...♘a6 is a rare idea. As a rule Black plays 9...♘c6 10 d5 ♘e7 and now:

a) 11 ♘e1 f5 (11...h5!? 12 h3 ♘h6 13 f4 exf4 14 ♗xf4 f5 15 ♕d2 ♘f7 16 ♘f3 fxe4 17 ♘xe4 ♘f5 18 g4 hxg4 19 hxg4 ♘5h6 20 ♘fg5 ♕e7 21 ♖ae1 ♗d7 with sufficient resources for Black according to Avrukh's analysis, Smirin-Avrukh, Tel Aviv 1999) 12 ♗xg4 fxg4 13 ♗e3 g5 (13...b6 has not led to good results for Black in games played so far: 14 b4 g5 15 a4 a5 16 bxa5 ♖xa5 17 ♘b5 ♗d7 18 ♗d2 ♖a8 19 ♘c2 ♘g6 20 a5 bxa5 21 ♗xa5 ♗xb5 22 cxb5 ♕d7 23 ♕e2 ♖ac8 24 ♘e3 h5 25 ♖ac1 ♘h4 26 ♕c4 ♖f4 27 b6 ♘f3+ 28 gxf3 gxf3 29 ♘f5 ♖xf5 30 exf5 ♕xf5 31 ♔h1 1-0 was Golubev-Schmaltz, 2nd Bundesliga 2000/1) 14 c5 ♘g6 15 ♖c1 ♖f7 and now White must choose how to develop his queenside initiative. The latest word is San Segundo-Roselli, Calvia OL 2004: 16 cxd6 cxd6 17 a4 ♗f8 18 ♘b5 ♗d7 19 b3!? (protecting a4) 19...♘f4 20 ♘xa7!? (deviating from Sashikiran-Kasimdzhanov, Dubai rpd 2002, which continued 20 ♘d3 ♗xb5 21 axb5 ♕d7 with chances for both sides) 20...♕a5 21 ♘b5 ♗xb5 22 axb5 ♕xb5 23 ♗xf4! ♖xf4 24 ♖c4 ♖a3 25 ♘d3 ♖xb3 26 ♘xf4 ♕xc4 27 ♘h5 ♖c3 (27...♕d3 can hardly be stronger) and instead of 28 ♕xg4 ♖c1 29 ♕e6+ ♔h8 30 ♕f6+ ♔g8 31 ♕g6+ ♔h8 32 ♕f6+ ♔g8 33 ♕g6+ ♔h8 34 ♘g3 b5 35 h3 b4 36 ♕f7 ♖xf1+ 37 ♘xf1 ♕c8 38 ♔h2 b3 39 ♘g3 b2 40 ♘h5 b1♕ 41 ♕f6+ with a draw, White could try 28 ♘g3!?.

b) 11 ♘d2 is less common, but not weaker: 11...f5 12 ♗xg4 fxg4 13 b4 (planning 14 c5 and 15 ♘c4) 13...a5!? 14 bxa5 ♖xa5 15 ♘b3 and White develops some pressure on the queenside, after, for example, 15...♖a6 16 c5 g5 17 ♗e3 ♘g6 18 a4, Gelfand-Nunn, Belgrade 1991.

It must be noted that in the pawn-structure which arises after ♗xg4 and ...fxg4 (standard in the 7...h6 line but atypical for the King's Indian as a whole), it is often hard for Black to create serious threats on the kingside because his own pawns block the routes to the white king for his pieces.

We return to 9...♘a6 *(D)*:



W

10 ♖b1

A useful waiting move. Other moves:

a) After 10 h3 Black can continue with either 10...♘f6 (aiming to transpose to line 'b2') or 10...exd4 11 ♘xd4 ♘f6, planning to attack the e4-pawn and provoke f3, after which White's kingside will be weakened.

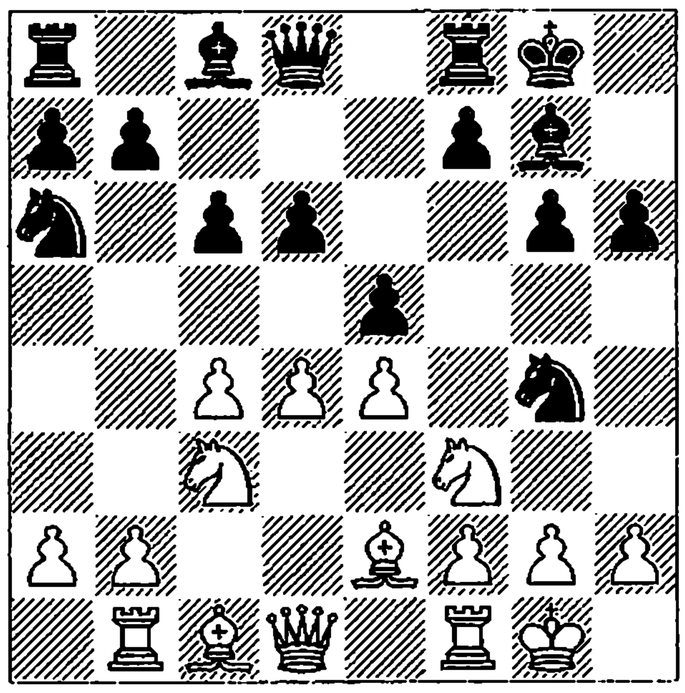
b) The simple 10 dxe5!? is of interest:

b1) 10...♘xe5 11 ♗e3 (11 ♘d4! might be stronger, because Black's knights are not well coordinated and it is hard for him to develop activity) 11....♗e6 12 ♘xe5 dxe5 13 ♕b3 (13 a3!? c6 14 ♕xd8 ♖fxd8 15 ♖fd1 with a somewhat better endgame, G.Georgadze-Komarov, Benasque 1995) 13...♕b8 14 ♕a4 c6 15 b4 ♖c8 16 ♖ab1 ♕c7 17 c5 ♘b8 18 ♖fc1 ♘d7 19 b5 ♗f8 (White's play has been too straightforward, and Black has equalized easily) 20 bxc6 bxc6 21 ♕a3 ♖ab8 22 f3 ♖xb1 23 ♘xb1 a5 24 ♗c4 ♗xc4 25 ♖xc4 ♖b8 26 ♘d2 ♕a7 27 ♘b3 ♕a6 28 ♕a4 ♖b4! 29 ♖xb4 ♕e2 30 ♗d2 axb4 31 ♕xb4 ♕d1+ 32 ♔f2 ♕c2 33 ♕c3 ♕xa2 34 ♔g3 ♕a4 35 h3 ♕b5 36 ♗e3 h5 37 ♔h2 ♗e7 38 ♗f2 ♕e2 39 ♗g3 ♗g5 40 ♘a5? h4 41 ♗xe5 ♗d2 42 ♕c4 ♕e1 43 ♗d6 ♗e3 0-1 Gofman-Golubev, USSR Army Cht (Leningrad) 1989.

b2) 10...dxe5!? 11 h3 ♘f6 12 ♘xe5 (Sashikiran-Golubev, Canarias en Red blitz 2004 continued 12 ♗e3!? ♘d7 13 a3 ♘ac5 14 b4 ♘e6 15 ♖a2 a5 16 ♖d2 axb4 17 axb4 c6 18 c5 ♕e7 19 ♗c4 ♘f4 20 ♖e1 with slightly better chances for White) 12...♘c5 13 ♗f3 (or 13 ♕c2 ♘fxe4 14 ♘xe4 ♗f5 15 ♗f3 ♗xe5) 13...♕e7!? 14 ♗f4 (or 14 ♘d3 ♘cxe4 15 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 16 ♖e1 f5) 14...♖d8 15 ♕c2 ♘e6 16 ♗e3 ♘g5! 17 ♗xg5 hxg5 18 ♘d3 g4 19 hxg4 c6 and Black has enough compensation for the two sacrificed pawns.

10...c6!? *(D)*

This move (once suggested by Ponomariov) is an attempt to improve upon 10...f5 11 dxe5 ♘xe5 (11...fxe4!? 12 ♘xe4 ♗f5) 12 ♘xe5 dxe5 13 b4 with an initiative for White, Ivanchuk-Topalov, Linares 1995.



W

11 d5

A good decision. On the whole, d5 is quite a standard reaction to ...c6 in Classical lines. 11 c5!? is an interesting try, but it does not lead to an advantage for White: 11...exd4 (11...dxc5!?) 12 ♘xd4 dxc5 (or maybe 12...♘xc5 13 ♗xg4 ♗xg4 14 ♕xg4 ♗xd4 15 ♗xh6 ♖e8 16 ♗g5 ♕c8) 13 ♘xc6 ♕h4 14 ♘e7+ ♔h7 15 ♗f4 ♕xe7!? 16 ♗xg4 ♖d8 17 ♕e2 ♗xg4 18 ♕xg4 ♘b4.

Or 11 h3 ♘f6 (11...exd4 12 ♘xd4 ♘f6 is also possible) 12 d5 (12 dxe5 dxe5 13 ♘xe5 ♘c5 with good compensation) 12...♘c5!? 13 ♘d2 (13 ♕c2? allows the typical blow 13...♘cxe4 with the idea 14 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 15 ♕xe4 ♗f5 and White's b1-rook is lost) 13...a5 14 b3 ♗d7 15 a3 cxd5 16 cxd5 ♕b8 with good counterplay for Black.

11...f5 12 ♘d2

12 exf5!? deserved attention: 12...♗xf5 (after 12...gxf5 13 dxc6 bxc6 14 b4 e4?! 15 ♘d4 the activity of Black's pieces can hardly compensate for his numerous weaknesses) 13 ♗d3 and if 13...♘c5 then 14 ♗xf5 gxf5 15 b4 ♘e4 16 ♘xe4 fxe4 17 ♘d2 ♕h4 (after 17...♘xf2 18 ♖xf2 ♖xf2 19 ♔xf2 ♕h4+ White can consider 20 ♔e2!? cxd5 21 cxd5, when it is not easy for Black to prove compensation for a piece) 18 h3 ♘xf2 19 ♕e2 (not 19 ♕e1? ♘xh3+ 20 gxh3 ♖xf1+ 21 ♕xf1 ♖f8 22 ♕g2 ♕e1+ 23 ♘f1 e3) 19...♘d3 20 ♖xf8+ ♖xf8 21 ♘xe4 cxd5 22 cxd5 ♘f4 23 ♗xf4 exf4 with a defensible position for Black because 24 ♘xd6?! f3 25 ♕e6+ ♔h8 is not profitable for White.

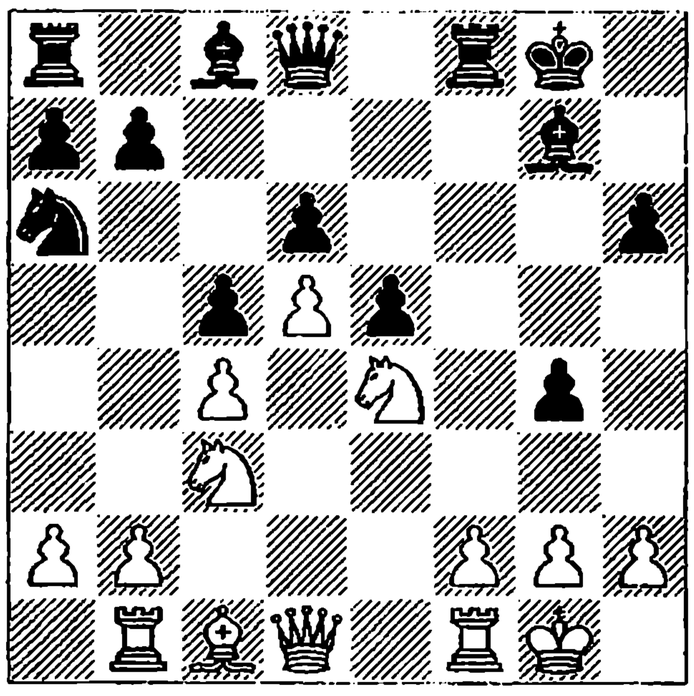
12 b4 can be answered by 12...c5!?.

12...c5?!

Totally underestimating White's reply. Better is 12...♘f6 13 dxc6 bxc6 14 b4 ♘c7!?.

13 exf5! gxf5 14 ♗xg4 fxg4 15 ♘de4 *(D)*

B



Black's problem now is the extremely unfortunate position of his knight. Very soon White will open the game by f3 and will have superior forces on the kingside.

15...♗f5 16 ♗e3

The immediate 16 f3 is met by 16...♕h4 with some counterplay.

16...♕d7 17 ♕d2 ♔h7 18 ♖be1!?

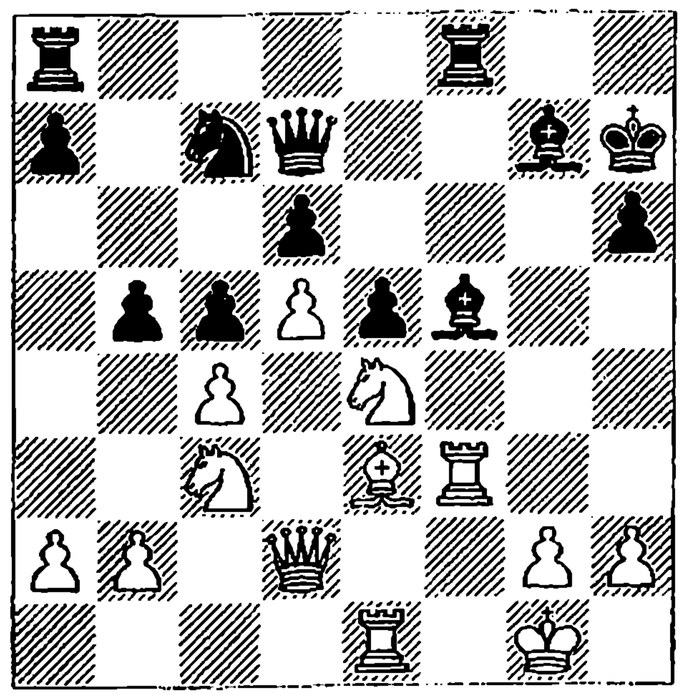
Here 18 f3!? was quite a decent alternative: 18...gxf3 19 ♖xf3 ♗xe4 20 ♘xe4 (after 20 ♖xf8 ♖xf8 21 ♘xe4 ♕f5 White must play 22 ♘c3, giving Black the possibility to activate his knight by 22...♘b4!) 20...♖xf3 21 gxf3 ♖g8 22 ♔h1 ♕f5 23 ♖f1 ♗f8 and Black may hope to hold this position, but he is certainly worse.

18...♘c7?

It was necessary to reduce the impact of 19 f3 by 18...♗g6!. Instead, Black tries to create rapid counterplay, but the attempt fails.

19 f3 gxf3 20 ♖xf3 b5 *(D)*

W



21 ♖xf5!

Eliminating Black's key piece.

21...♖xf5

Or 21...♕xf5 22 ♘xd6 ♕g6 23 ♘cxb5 ♘xb5 24 ♘xb5 with a clear advantage for White.

22 ♕c2!

Now 22...♖af8? loses to 23 g4, so Black has no defence against 23 ♘xd6.

22...♔h8 23 ♘xd6 ♖ff8 24 ♘dxb5 ♘xb5 25 ♘xb5

White has already collected two pawns as compensation for the exchange. Taking into account White's numerous positional pluses, it is easy to evaluate Black's position as objectively lost.

25...♖ac8 26 ♕e4 ♖f6 27 ♘c3 ♖e8 28 ♕h4 e4 29 ♘xe4 ♖g6 30 ♘xc5 ♕f5 31 ♘e6 ♕c2 32 ♗f2 ♗xb2 33 ♕e4 ♕xe4 34 ♖xe4 ♖f6 35 c5 ♖b8 36 c6 ♗c3 37 c7 ♖b1+ 38 ♖e1 1-0

Game 16

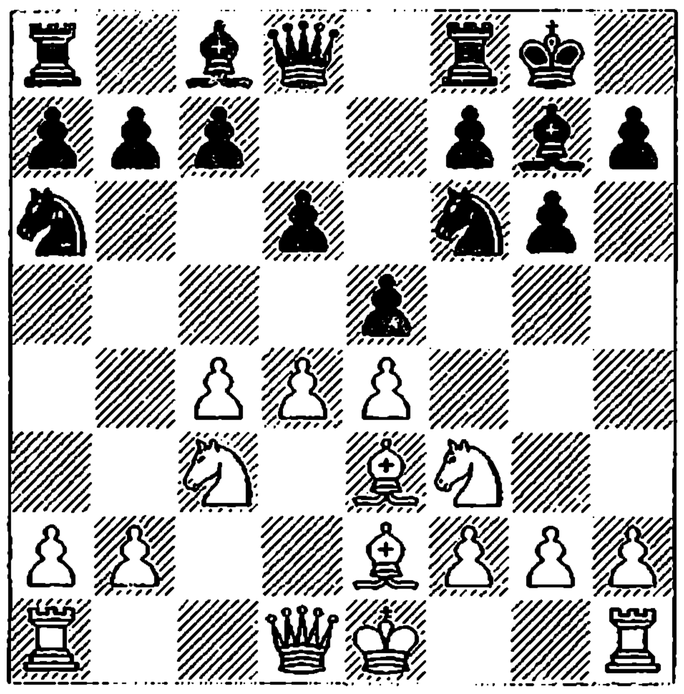
Kasimdzhanov – Golubev

Bundesliga 2001/2

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 5 ♘f3 0-0 6 ♗e2 e5 7 ♗e3 ♘a6 *(D)*

8 0-0

Here and for the next few moves the players follow the main line. After 8 d5, the logical answer is 8...♘g4! (8...♘c5 9 ♘d2! is promising for White – see Game 19) 9 ♗g5 f6 10 ♗h4. Here Black has more prospects than in the similar line with 7...c6 8 d5. For example,



Simeonidis-Avrukh, Athens open 2003 continued 10...h5 11 ♘d2 ♕e8!? 12 h3 ♘h6 13 g4?! (here this plan is not dangerous for Black) 13...hxg4 14 hxg4 ♕e7 15 a3 c5 16 ♘f1 ♘f7 17 ♘e3 ♗h6 and Black's chances can already be preferred.

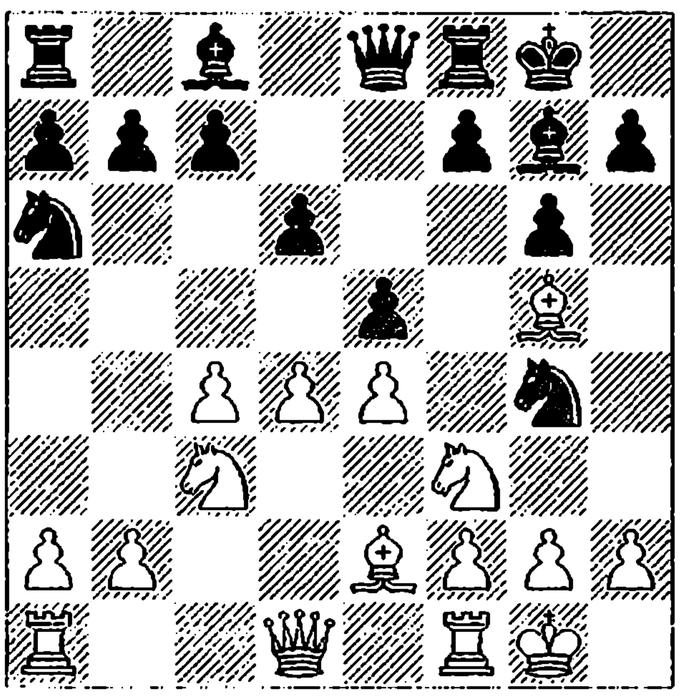
8...♘g4

After 8...c6 White plays 9 d5!, transposing to note 'a' to Black's 7th move in Game 14. White can also fight for a small advantage in the endgame by 9 dxe5 dxe5 10 ♕xd8 ♖xd8 11 ♖fd1 ♖e8! 12 h3, which is considered in note 'c' to Black's 9th move at the start of Chapter 5.

8...♕c8 9 dxe5 dxe5 transposes to 7 0-0 ♕e8 8 dxe5 dxe5 9 ♗e3 ♘a6 (see Game 13).

9 ♗g5 ♕e8 *(D)*

9...f6 10 ♗c1 is quite pleasant for White because Black's pieces are a bit uncoordinated. 10...♔h8 11 h3 ♘h6 12 dxe5 fxe5 (or 12...dxe5 13 ♕xd8 ♖xd8 14 ♗e3 ♗e6 15 a3 ♘f7 16 b4 with an edge for White, Kramnik-Topalov, Novgorod 1997) 13 ♗e3 ♘f7 14 ♕d2 and White will soon prepare a queenside assault. It is hard for Black to create active counterplay, Karpov-Kasparov, New York/Lyons Wch (7) 1990.



10 dxe5

It is considered most precise for White to exchange pawns before playing h3. In the case of 10 h3 h6 (worse is 10...f6 11 ♗c1 ♘h6 12 ♗e3!) 11 ♗c1 Black can play 11...exd4! (instead of 11...♘f6 12 dxe5 dxe5 13 ♗e3) 12 ♘xd4 ♘f6 13 ♗f3 ♘h7!? (Gelfand's idea) 14 ♖e1 ♘g5 with counterplay.

Still, White can try to do without h3 at all. Thus, there is 10 ♖e1, when the critical line is 10...exd4!? 11 ♘xd4 ♕c5 12 ♘f3 ♕c5.

The ultra-sharp 10 c5!? was almost unknown until Topalov's compatriot and assistant, GM Ivan Cheparinov, twice used this move in 2004. (After witnessing some results of their preparation in other openings in Topalov's Sofia 2005 games, I can suggest a careful examination of Topalov's and Cheparinov's moves!) *New in Chess Yearbook 76* has an interesting survey on this very hot topic by Carlos Matamoros. I shall partly refer to his findings:

a) 10...f6 11 ♗h4 dxc5 12 ♗xa6 bxa6 13 d5!? with strong positional compensation for the pawn, Pogorelov-Camacho Collados, La Pobla de Lillet open 2005.

b) 10...exd4 11 ♘d5 dxc5 (11...♕xe4!? 12 ♘e7+ ♔h8 and here according to V.Mikhalevski's analysis from ChessPublishing.com, the critical line is 13 cxd6! ♘c5! with total chaos; after 11...h6!?, 12 ♗h4 transposes to line 'd', but White has the additional possibility of 12 ♗e7; 11...♘xc5 12 ♘xc7 ♕xe4 13 ♖e1 ♖b8 14 ♗c4 ♕f5 15 ♗e7 {Navara-McShane, Gothenburg Echt 2005} is crazy enough but possibly favours White – as does 11...f6 12 ♗xa6 bxa6 13 ♘xc7 ♕xe4 14 ♕b3+ ♔h8 and then either 15 ♗h4 {V.Johansson – Kachiani-Gersinska, Gothenburg wom Echt 2005} or 15 ♗d2) 12 ♗xa6 bxa6 13 ♖c1!! (13 ♘xc7 ♕xe4 is playable for Black) with the initiative, Cheparinov-Matamoros, Dos Hermanas 2005.

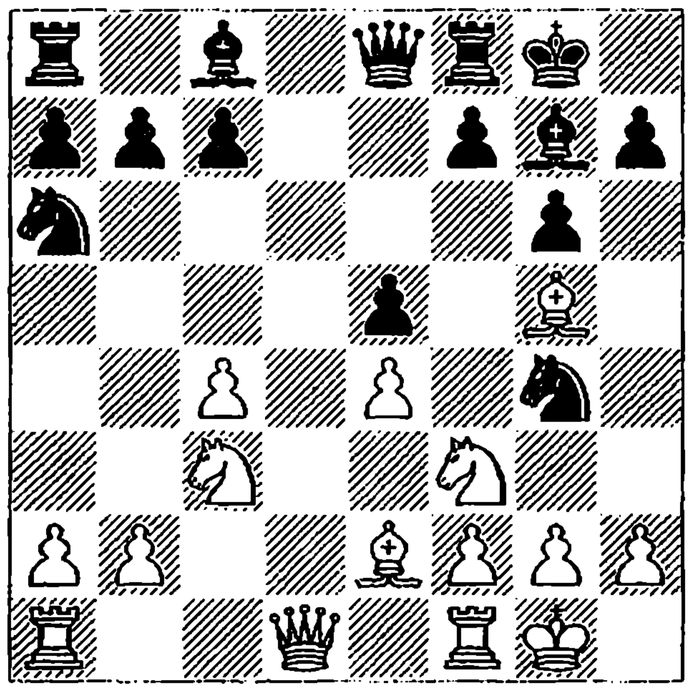
c) 10...dxc5 11 ♗xa6!? (11 ♘d5 h6 12 ♗h4 c6 13 ♘e7+ ♔h8 14 h3! {Matamoros} might be even stronger) 11...bxa6 12 ♘d5 f6 (12...exd4 transposes to line 'b') 13 ♘xc7 ♕c6 14 ♘xa8 fxg5 15 dxc5 ♕xa8 16 ♕b3+ ♔h8 17 ♘xg5 looks unsafe for Black.

d) 10...h6!? (the best move?) 11 ♗h4 exd4 (11...g5?! 12 ♗g3! exd4 13 ♘xd4 with the idea 13...♘xc5 14 ♘db5! – Matamoros) 12 ♘d5 (here 12 ♘xd4?! is countered by 12...dxc5!) 12...g5 (12...dxc5 13 ♗xa6 bxa6 14 ♖c1!?),

and now 13 ♗xa6 (13 ♗g3 c6 14 ♗xd6 cxd5 15 exd5 is also unclear) 13...gxh4 (Marques-Matsuura, Brazilian Ch (Itabirito) 1998) 14 ♘xc7 ♕c6 15 cxd6 bxa6 16 ♖c1 ♕xe4 17 ♖e1 ♕b7 18 ♘xa8 ♕xa8 is unclear – Matamoros.

10...dxe5 *(D)*

W



11 h3

11 ♘d2 is less common, but also a serious move. 11...f6 (instead, 11...♗f6 12 h4 h6 13 ♗xg4 hxg5 14 ♘d5 ♕d8 15 h5 ♗g7 16 ♗xc8 ♖xc8 17 hxg6 c6! 18 ♘e3 fxg6, as in Khuzman-Miroshnichenko, Kapuskasing 2004, appears strategically risky for Black) 12 ♗h4 h5 (12...♘h6 13 ♘b3!?, preventing ...♘c5, seems to be a bit better for White, G.Georgadze-Kindermann, Lippstadt 1998) 13 a3 ♗e6 (13...♘c5 14 b4 ♘e6 15 ♗xg4 hxg4 16 ♕xg4 c6!?, with compensation for the pawn, deserves attention) 14 h3 ♘h6 15 f3 ♖d8 16 b4 (Khuzman-Avrukh, Beersheba rpd 2004) with a complex but somewhat better position for White according to Avrukh's notes in *CBM*.

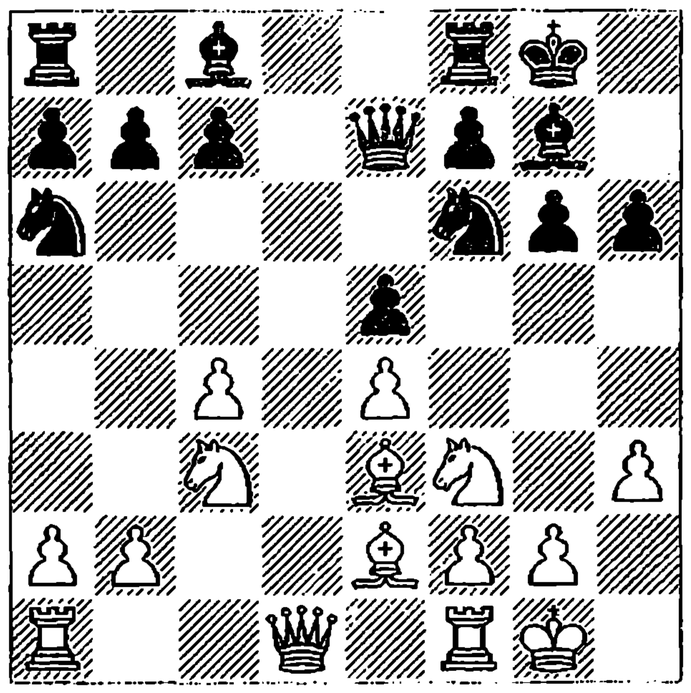
11 ♕c1!? c6 12 ♖d1 is a fresh idea. Now an important line is 12...f6 (12...♘c5 13 ♖d8!; 12...h6 13 ♗d2 ♔h7 14 h3 ♘f6 15 ♗e3! as in Beliavsky-Nevednichy, Paks 2004 is pleasant for White) 13 ♗d2 f5 14 h3 ♘f6 15 exf5 gxf5 16 ♗h6 (Harikrishna-Volokitin, Bermuda 2005) and here maybe Black can try the risky 16...f4 17 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 18 ♖e1 ♕h5.

11...f6!?

This idea has been very actively discussed in recent years. The old main line, which is still topical, is 11...h6 12 ♗d2 (or 12 ♗c1) 12...♘f6 13 ♗e3 ♕e7 *(D)*, and now:

a) 14 a3 c6 15 b4 ♘h5 16 ♖e1 (16 c5!? ♖d8 17 ♕c1 ♔h7 18 ♖d1 ♗e6 19 ♕c2 ♘c7 ½-½ Shipov-Svidler, Russian Ch (St Petersburg) 1998) 16...♘f4 17 ♗f1 ♕f6 (17...♖d8!?) 18 ♖a2! followed by ♖d2, as in Topalov-Movsesian, Sarajevo 2000 and other games, can be assessed as somewhat better for White.

W



b) 14 ♘d5 ♕d8! and now:

b1) 15 ♘xf6+ does not achieve much after 15...♕xf6 16 c5 ♘b8!, Piket-Kramnik, Tilburg 1997.

b2) 15 ♕c1 ♔h7 (15...♘xe4!? is also possible, with the idea 16 ♖d1 ♔h7! or 16 ♗xh6 c6 17 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 18 ♘c3 ♘xc3 19 ♕xc3 f6, Pham Minh Hoang-Lane, Budapest 2002) 16 ♖d1 (16 ♘xf6+ ♕xf6 17 c5 is safer) 16...♘xe4! 17 ♘b6 (or 17 c5 ♗d7 and Black is OK) 17...axb6 18 ♖xd8 ♖xd8 with fully sufficient compensation for the queen, Sundararajan-Thipsay, Indian Ch (Mumbai) 2000.

b3) 15 ♕c2!? and now 15...♘d7 16 ♖fd1!? c6 17 ♘c3 ♕e7 18 ♕d2 ♔h7 19 ♕d6! was a bit better for White in Relange-Kotsur, Shenyang tt 1999, while after 15...c6 16 ♘xf6+ ♕xf6 the important game Beliavsky-McShane, Igualada 2005 continued 17 c5 ♘c7 18 ♖fd1 ♘e6 19 ♗c4! ♖e8! 20 b4 ♗f8 21 ♖ab1 ♘f4 22 ♗xf4 ♕xf4 23 ♖b3 b5 24 cxb6 axb6 25 ♘h2! and here Black should have played 25...♕h4! 26 ♖f3 ♖a7 with an acceptable position.

One more move, 11...♘f6!?, is seldom used. Then 12 ♗e3 is an unexpected transposition to the line 7 0-0 ♕e8 8 dxe5 dxe5 9 ♗e3 ♘a6 10 h3.

12 ♗d2

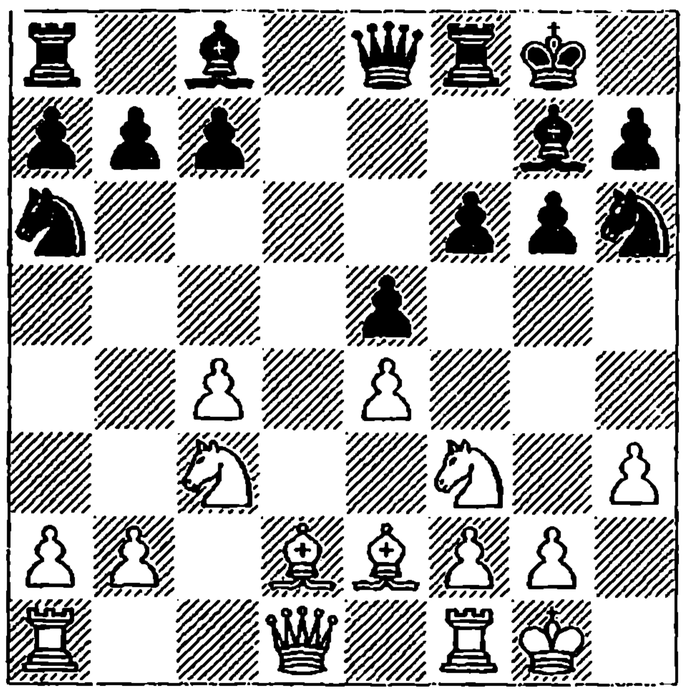
12 hxg4?! fxg5 13 ♘xg5 ♕e7 14 ♘h3 c6 gives Black enough compensation for a pawn.

After 12 ♗c1 ♘h6, 13 ♗e3 transposes to the text. In M.Gurevich-Volokitin, Valle d'Aosta open 2002 White tried 13 a3 c6 14 ♕c2 ♘f7 15 b4 ♘c7 16 ♗e3 ♔h8 17 ♖ad1 f5 18 exf5 gxf5 19 ♖fe1 ♖g8 20 ♗f1 and here, according to

Volokitin, Black should have played 20....♗e6! with sufficient counterplay.

12...♘h6 *(D)*

W



In comparison with the 11...h6 line, here Black has more hopes to prepare active counterplay with ...f5. His basic plan involves ...c6 and ...♘f7, where the knight protects the sensitive d6-square.

13 ♗e3

The rare 13 ♖b1!? can transpose to the game after 13...♘f7 14 b4 c6 15 ♗e3.

The main alternative is 13 c5!?, and now:

a) Possible is 13...c6 14 ♗xa6 bxa6 and after 15 ♗xh6!? ♗xh6 16 ♕a4 ♖b8! 17 b3 (17 b4 ♕e6! Avrukh) 17...♖f7 Black's position proved to be defensible in number of games.

b) 13...♘xc5 14 ♕c1! ♘f7 15 ♘d5 (White regains the pawn he temporarily sacrificed) 15...♘e6 16 ♗b4!? (after 16 ♘xc7 ♘xc7 17 ♕xc7 ♘d8! Black has an acceptable game) 16...c6 (sacrificing an exchange; worse is 16...c5 17 ♗xc5 ♘xc5 18 ♕xc5, when White has an obvious initiative) 17 ♗xf8 (17 ♘e7+ ♔h8 18 ♘xc8 c5!) 17...♕xf8 18 ♘e3 ♘d6 19 ♕c2 f5 (19...♘f4!? 20 ♖fd1 ♘xe2+ 21 ♕xe2 ♗e6 is less ambitious, V.Mikhalevski-Oratovsky, Israeli Cht 2004) 20 exf5 (improving upon Shabalov-Perelshteyn, Vermont CCA open 2003, which continued 20 ♘c4 fxe4 21 ♘fxe5 ♘d4 22 ♕d2 c5 23 f4 ♗e6 with good compensation for Black) 20...gxf5 21 ♗c4!?. In Shabalov-Movsesian, Bermuda 2004, 21...♔h8 led to problems for Black after 22 ♗xe6 ♗xe6 23 ♖ad1. Stronger was 21...♘xc4 22 ♕xc4 (22 ♘xc4 e4!) 22...♔h8 23 ♖ad1 e4 (Avrukh), when if White tries to counter-sacrifice the exchange by 24 ♘d4 ♘xd4 25 ♖xd4 Black should not accept the offer, as this would weaken the dark squares in his camp, and prefer 25...♕e7!? followed by ....♗e6.

13...♘f7

Possibly a slightly more precise move-order is 13...c6 14 c5 (after 14 ♖b1 Black can consider the immediate 14...f5!?) and now 14...♘f7 (transposing to 13...♘f7 14 c5 c6), rather than 14...♘c7?! 15 ♘d2! ♘f7 16 ♘c4 ♕e7 17 ♘d6 ♖d8 18 ♕b3! with an initiative for White, Kiriakov-Glek, Russian Ch (Krasnoiarsk) 2003.

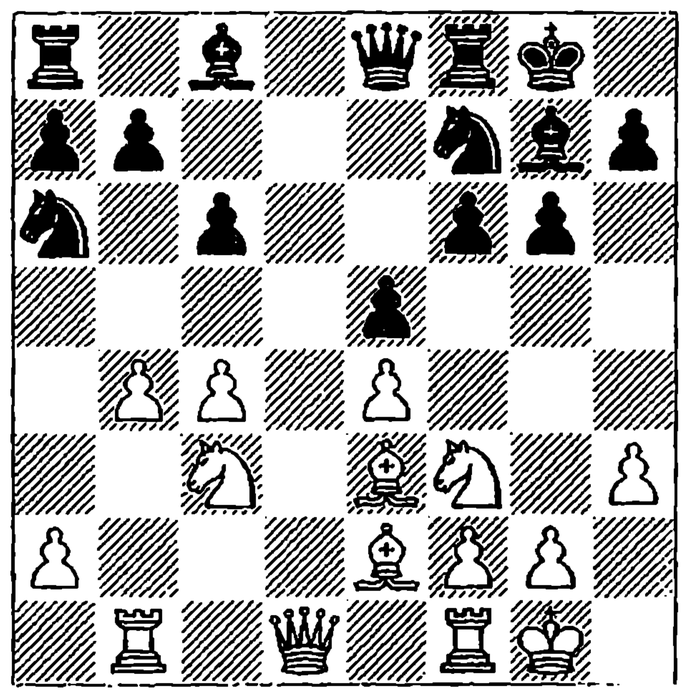
14 ♖b1!?

After 14 b4 Black can make a thematic exchange sacrifice for a pawn by 14...♘xb4! 15 ♗c5 ♘a6 16 ♗xf8 ♕xf8, where his compensation looks sufficient.

14 c5 c6 has been played quite often. Now, for example, 15 ♗xa6 (15 ♘d2 f5 16 f3 ♕e7!? 17 ♖c1 f4 18 ♗f2 ♖d8 with strong counterplay, Grooten-Motyliov, Hoogeveen open 2003) 15...bxa6 16 ♕a4 ♖b8 17 b3 f5 18 exf5 gxf5 19 ♖fe1 ♖b7 20 ♖ad1 ♖e7 21 ♕c4 h6!? 22 ♘h4 (M.Gurevich-Comas Fabrego, Andorra open 2004) 22...♔h7!? with chances for both sides.

14...c6 15 b4 *(D)*

B



White threatens to win the exchange by 16 b5 and 17 ♗c5.

15...♕e7

After the game I was not too happy with the move. Possibly 15...♔h8!? (freeing the g8 square for the rook and keeping the queen on e8, where it protects the c6-pawn) 16 b5 (½-½ Piket-Gi.Hernandez, New Delhi FIDE KO 2000) 16...♘c7 17 ♗c5 ♖g8 is a better idea.

16 c5?!

16 ♕a4! is the move I was afraid of. White preserves the possibility of advancing either the c- or b-pawn (the latter idea seems to be more dangerous for Black). In Nayer-Svidler

St Petersburg-Moscow 2003 Black continued 16...♗e6 and after 17 c5 a draw was agreed, but 17 b5 with some pressure could be stronger. The awkward 16...♘c7 17 ♗c5 ♘d6 18 ♖fd1 ♖d8 hardly solves Black's problems either: 19 b5 ♘e6 (Nayer-Kruppa, St Petersburg 2003) 20 ♗b6!? keeps an initiative for White.

16...f5 17 ♗c4

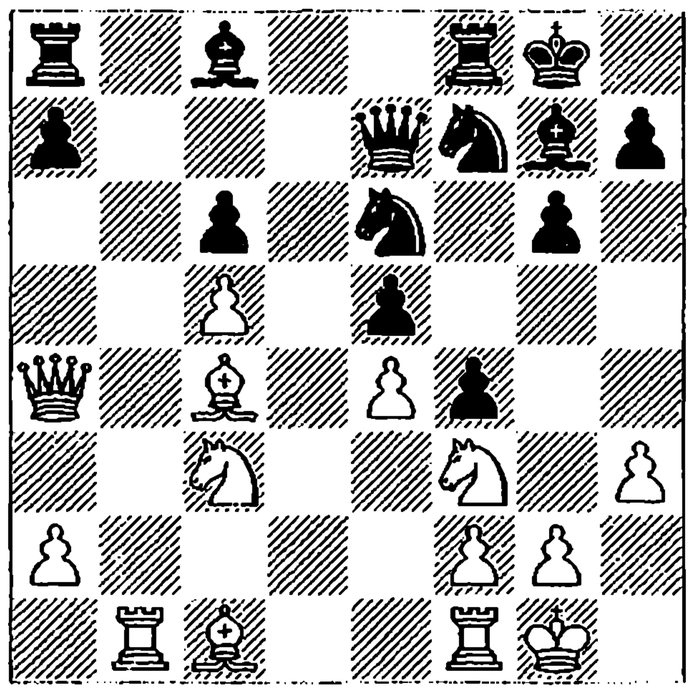
17 exf5 leads to a double-edged position. Black can consider capturing on f5 with either pawn or bishop (still, 17...gxf5 seems to be preferable). Instead, White allows ...f4, and the situation becomes really sharp.

17...f4 18 ♗c1 ♘c7 19 b5! ♘e6

It was not in Black's interests to accept the sacrifice: 19...♕xc5?! 20 ♕b3 cxb5 21 ♘xb5 ♘xb5 22 ♗xb5! with a strong initiative for White (rather than 22 ♕xb5 ♕xb5 23 ♖xb5 b6! with the idea 24 ♘xe5?! ♗a6).

20 bxc6 bxc6 21 ♕a4 *(D)*

B



The c6-pawn is attacked.

21...♕c7?!

After long thought, Black makes a wrong decision. In his annotations, Kasimdzhanov pointed out that 21...♘xc5!?, which looks extremely risky for Black, in fact equalizes after 22 ♕xc6 ♗b7 23 ♘d5 ♕d6! 24 ♕c7 ♕xc7 25 ♘xc7 ♖ac8 26 ♘d5 ♔h8 27 ♗a3 ♘d6.

I spent my time mainly on 21...♘d4 22 ♘xd4 exd4 23 ♕xc6! dxc3 24 ♗xf7+! (24 ♕xa8? ♗e6) 24...♕xf7 25 ♕xa8, trying to understand whether Black would have sufficient compensation there. Even with a computer's assistance, a definite answer is hard to provide. 25...♗a6 (25...f3 26 g4! ♗xg4 27 ♖b8 ♗xh3 28 ♖d1 ♕e6 29 ♗f4!? ♕g4+ 30 ♗g3 ♕g5 31 ♖xf8+ ♗xf8 32 ♕b8 ♗e6 33 ♕e5 with an advantage for White) 26 ♕d5 c2! looks like Black's best chance, but after 27 ♖b4 he still experiences problems.

Kasimdzhanov proposed a more interesting idea: 21...♕e8!? 22 ♗a3 ♘d4 23 ♘g5 f3 (the important difference from 21...♕c7 22 ♗a3 ♘d4? is that here 24 ♗xf7+ ♖xf7 25 ♕c4 is parried by 25...♗e6) 24 ♖fd1 fxg2 25 ♘xf7 ♖xf7 26 ♗xf7+ ♔xf7! (not 26...♕xf7? 27 ♖xd4! exd4 28 ♕xc6 ♕e6 29 ♕xa8 ♕xh3 30 ♕d5+ ♗e6 31 ♕d8+ ♗f8 32 f3!! ♕xf3 33 ♕xd4 ♕h3 34 ♗b2 ♕h1+ 35 ♔f2 ♕h4+ 36 ♔xg2 ♕g5+ 37 ♔f1 ♗xc5 38 ♕d3 ♕g1+ 39 ♔e2 ♗g4+ 40 ♔d2) 27 ♔xg2 ♔g8 28 ♖d3 ♕f7 with compensation for the exchange.

22 ♗a3 ♔h8

22...♘d4? does not work in view of 23 ♘g5 f3 24 ♗xf7+ ♖xf7 25 ♕c4!, when White not only will win the exchange, but will also trade queens.

23 ♘e2!

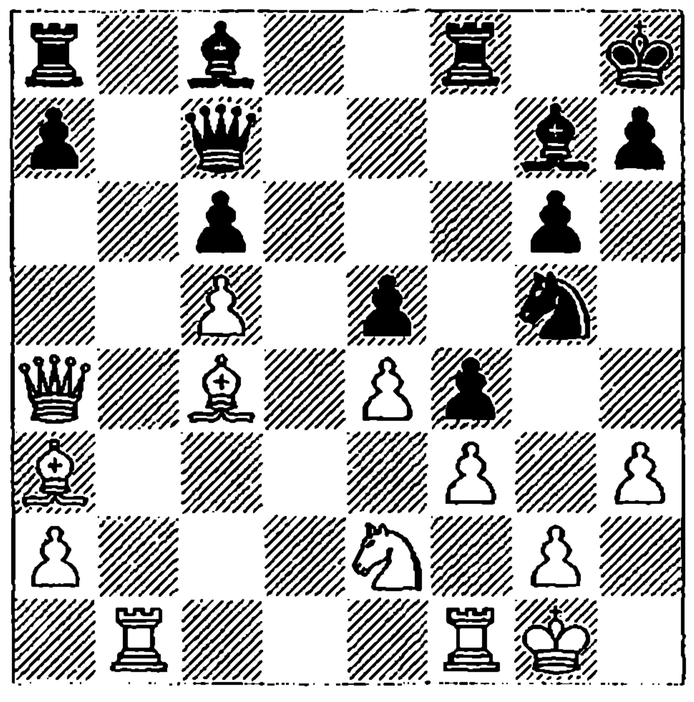
A strong prophylactic move, which makes ...♘d4 senseless.

23...♘fg5

Played without enthusiasm, but Black doesn't really have a better move. Kasimdzhanov gives 23...g5 24 ♖fd1 h5 25 ♖d6! ♘xd6 26 cxd6 ♕d7 27 ♕a5 with excellent compensation for White.

24 ♘xg5 ♘xg5 25 f3! *(D)*

B



White's position is more promising now, but in the further play he should not allow Black to sacrifice a piece on h3 or f3 in a favourable form.

25...♖d8

25...♕e7? is refuted by 26 h4! (but not 26 ♕xc6? ♘xh3+, when 27 gxh3 ♕g5+ 28 ♔h2 ♗xh3! 29 ♖f2 ♕h4 30 ♔g1 ♕g5+ 31 ♔h1 ♕h5! is a draw).

26 ♗b4

Activating the bishop and creating the threat of 27 ♗a5.

26...a5

Weakening b6, but there was no other way to defend.

27 ♗e1!?

Provoking Black's next. But also good was 27 ♗c3 ♕e7?! 28 ♕xc6 ♘xh3+ 29 ♔h2!.

27...♗f8

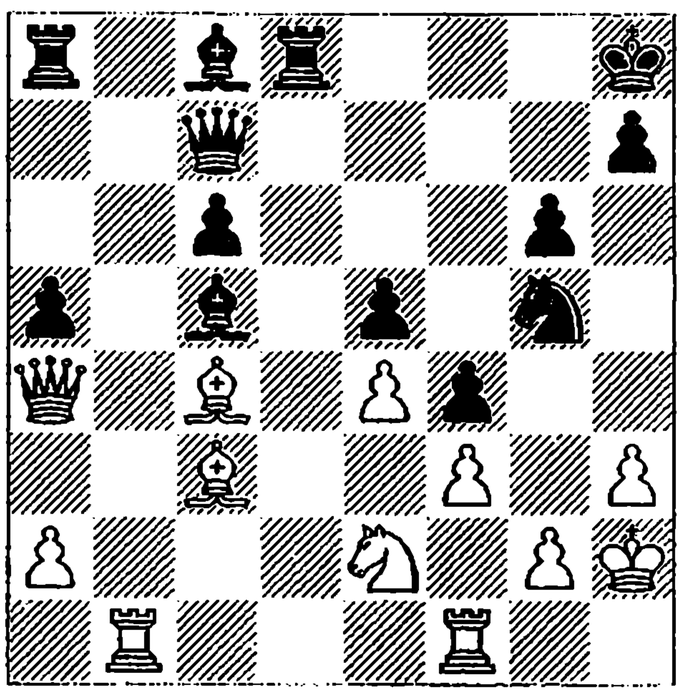
27...♘e6 can be answered by 28 ♗f2 ♗f8 29 ♖b6 ♗xc5 30 ♗xc5 ♘xc5 31 ♕xc6 ♕xc6 32 ♖xc6 with an initiative for White.

28 ♗c3!

Not 28 ♗f2?! ♗xh3 29 ♗h4 ♕e7.

28...♗xc5+ 29 ♔h2 *(D)*

B



White obviously has good compensation for the pawn, but Black's resources are not yet exhausted.

29...♖f8

Defending against both 30 ♘xf4 and 30 ♕xc6 ♕xc6 31 ♗xe5+.

29...♗d4?! would lead to a clear advantage for White after 30 ♘xd4 exd4 31 ♗a1 c5 32 ♗d5 ♖a7 33 ♖fc1.

However, 29...♘e6!? deserves attention: 30 ♗xe6 (30 ♘xf4 ♘xf4 31 ♕xc6 is parried by 31...♗d6! 32 ♖b6 ♕e7! 33 ♕xa8 ♗xh3 with a counterattack) 30...♗xe6 31 ♘xf4 ♗f7 followed by 32...♗d4 and 33...c5, as recommended by Frank Zeller.

30 ♖fd1 ♗e7?!

The transfer of the bishop to f6 prepares ...♕g7-h6 but at the same time weakens Black's queenside considerably. The try 30...♗xh3? is refuted by 31 ♖b7! ♕xb7 32 ♗xe5+, but 30...h6!? or 30...h5 was preferable.

31 ♕b3!

With the very strong threat of 32 ♕b6.

31...♗f6

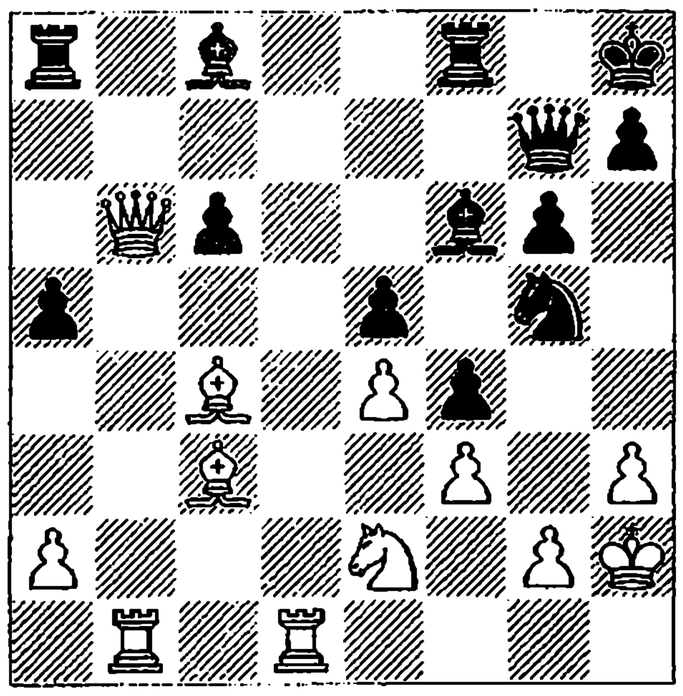
Not 31....♗xh3? 32 ♕b7.

32 ♕b6

Kasimdzhanov gives 32 h4!? ♘f7 33 ♕b6 ♕e7 34 ♕xc6 ♖a7 35 ♗xf7 ♕xf7 36 ♖b8 ♖c7 37 ♕b5, but the text-move is probably stronger.

32...♕g7 *(D)*

W



33 ♖d6?!

Black has regrouped his pieces for a counterattack, and it was high time for White to prevent ...♗xh3 by the prophylactic 33 ♖d3!, when he has a serious advantage. For example, 33...♕h6 34 ♘g1! ♗e6 (34...♕h4? 35 ♗e1) 35 ♗xe6 ♘xe6 36 ♕xc6 ♘d4 37 ♗xd4 exd4 38 ♘e2.

33...♗xh3! 34 ♘xf4!?

34 gxh3? ♘xf3+ followed by 35...♕h6! is bad for White. After 34 ♔g1 ♕h6 35 ♖xf6 ♘xf3+ 36 gxf3 ♕g5+ 37 ♔f2 Black has at least a draw by perpetual check following 37...♕h4+. Kasimdzhanov mentions two more interesting alternatives, which lead to unclear positions: 34 ♖xf6 ♕xf6 35 ♕c7 ♖fe8 (35...♖ae8? fails to 36 ♖b8!) 36 ♖b7 ♖ac8 37 ♕xa5 ♖cd8 38 ♗b3!? and 34 ♖h1 ♕h6 35 ♖xf6 ♖xf6 36 ♕c7 ♖e8 37 ♗xe5 ♘xf3+ 38 gxf3 ♗d7+ 39 ♔g2 ♕g5+ 40 ♔f2 ♕xe5 41 ♕xd7.

34...♕h6?

In serious mutual time-trouble I managed to calculate quickly the consequences of this move, except for the most important line, which occurred in the game. It was very difficult for Black to find a playable move. Thus, 34...♗e7? is not good in view of 35 ♕c5! ♖xf4 36 ♕xe5!. In fact, we found nothing good for Black in the brief post-mortem analysis.

However, the powerful blow 34...♗g4!! (found by *Fritz*) would have allowed Black to

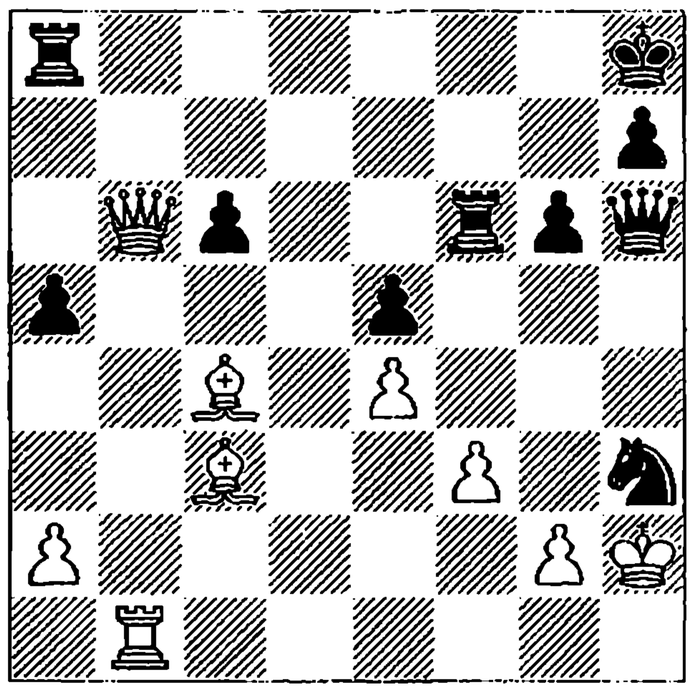
get very significant counterchances. According to Kasimdzhanov, White's only route to salvation is 35 ♕b2!! (35 fxg4? ♘xe4) 35...♕h6+ 36 ♔g1 ♗g7! 37 ♗xe5 ♖xf4 38 fxg4 ♖e8 39 ♗xg7+ ♕xg7 40 ♖xc6 ♕xb2 41 ♖xb2 ♘xe4 with an approximately equal endgame.

35 ♘xh3! ♘xh3 36 ♖xf6!

I was actually happy to see this move and I considered 36 gxh3? ♕f4+ 37 ♔g2 ♗h4 38 ♗xe5+! ♕xe5 39 ♕b2, with just an extra pawn for White, to be strongest.

36...♖xf6 *(D)*

W



37 ♕b8+!!

Surprise, surprise! Other variations, 37 gxh3? ♕f4+ and 37 ♗xe5? ♘g5+! 38 ♔g3 (38 ♔g1 ♘xf3+ 39 gxf3 ♕g5+) 38...♘xe4+ 39 fxe4 ♕g5+, favour Black.

37...♖xb8 38 ♖xb8+ ♔g7

At least allowing the opponent to execute a beautiful checkmate on the board.

39 ♖g8# (1-0)

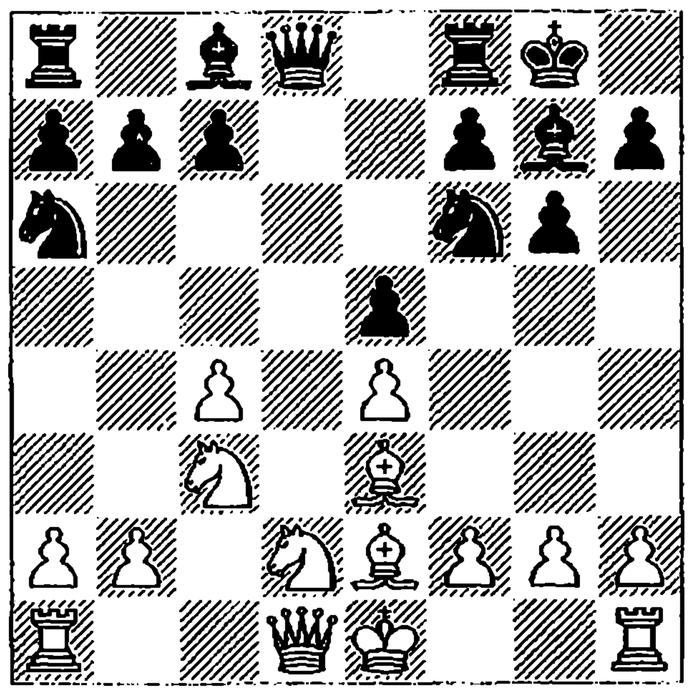
In his extensive annotations for the German magazine *KARL* (issue 1/2003), Kasimdzhanov called this game one of the best he had ever played. Well, it was before his FIDE World Championship victory in Tripoli.

Game 17
Hébert – Golubev
Canada vs Ukraine e-mail match 2003-4

Normally, I do not have enough patience to play chess by e-mail, but I made an exception for the friendly match between the Ukrainian and Canadian teams. My opponent, Jean Hébert, is an international master in over-the-board play and a grandmaster in correspondence chess.

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 5 ♘f3 0-0 6 ♗e2 e5 7 ♗e3 ♘a6 8 dxe5!? dxe5 9 ♘d2 *(D)*

B



An almost unexplored, but poisonous idea. I must confess that I underestimated it.

9...c6

A natural move, but possibly not the best. After 9...♕e7 White plays 10 ♘d5!, so Black could try to prevent White's next by 9...♘d7!? and if 10 ♘b3, then 10...♕e7 11 ♘d5 ♕d6 12 ♖c1!? (12 c5 ♘axc5 13 ♘xc5 ♘xc5 14 ♗xc5 ♕xc5 15 ♖c1 ♕a5+ 16 b4 ♕xa2) 12...♘ac5 13 ♘xc5 ♘xc5 14 ♗xc5 (alternatively, 14 ♕c2 ♘e6 15 c5 ♕d8 16 c6 bxc6 17 ♕xc6 ♗d7) 14...♕xc5 15 b4 ♕d6 16 c5 ♕d8 17 c6 bxc6 18 ♖xc6 ♗b7 with good chances for equality.

10 c5!

The point. Now Black's nightmares such as ♘c4-d6 could become quite real. After 10 0-0 Black would have played 10...♕e7!, preventing 11 c5.

10...♘b4

Preparing ...♘d3, but, unfortunately, the knight on d3 will be a problem rather than an achievement for Black. According to Hébert's notes, which were published in *Chess Today*, in answer to 10...♕e7 11 ♗xa6 bxa6 (as played in Bönsch-Shirov, Stockholm 1989) he was planning 12 ♘c4 (preventing ...a5) 12...♘g4 13 ♕d6 ♕b7 14 ♗d2 with some advantage for White.

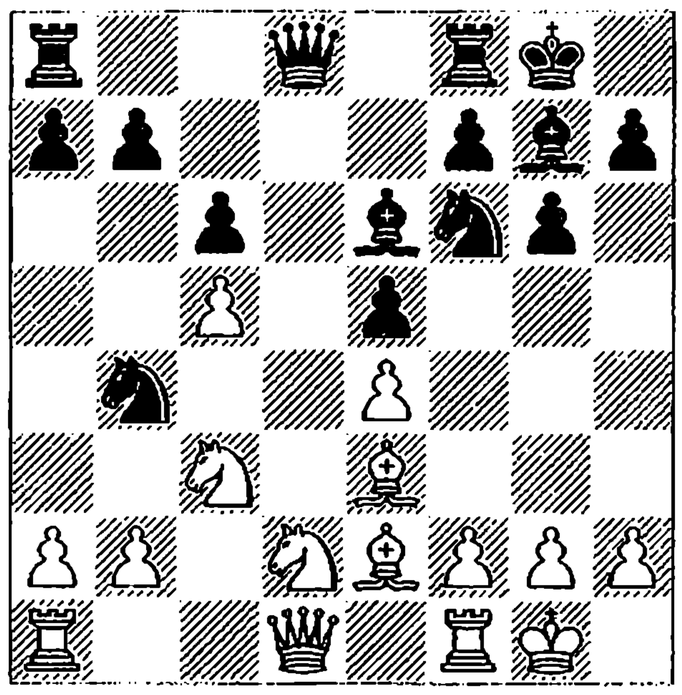
11 0-0

Simpler and stronger than 11 ♕a4!? ♘d3+ 12 ♗xd3 ♕xd3 13 ♘f3 ♕d8!? 14 ♘xe5 ♖e8 (rather than 14...♕e7 15 f4 ♘h5 16 ♘f3 ♖d8 17 e5 ♖d3 18 ♘d1!) 15 f4 ♘g4 16 ♘xg4 ♗xg4! (better than 16...♗xc3+ 17 bxc3 ♗xg4 18 ♕c4!) 17 ♕c4 (or 17 e5 ♕d3 18 ♕e4 ♕a6) 17...♕h4+

18 ♗f2 ♕h6! and Black has compensation for the pawn.

11...♗e6 *(D)*

The immediate 11...♘d3 was possible, but it is hard to trust in Black's chances after either 12 ♘c4 or 12 g3.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12 f3!?

White can plan to meet ...♘d3 in various ways. The text is prophylaxis against a possible ...♘g4 in a number of lines. No less critical is 12 a3!? ♘d3 13 g3! (instead of 13 ♕c2 ♘f4, Podgaets-Lorscheid, Dortmund open 1993) and now 13...♕d7 14 ♘f3! ♘xb2 15 ♕xd7 ♘xd7 16 ♖fb1 ♘c4 17 ♗xc4 ♗xc4 18 ♖xb7 gives White a clearly better endgame. Black's only hope seems to be 13...♘h5!? with the idea 14 ♕c2 ♘df4.

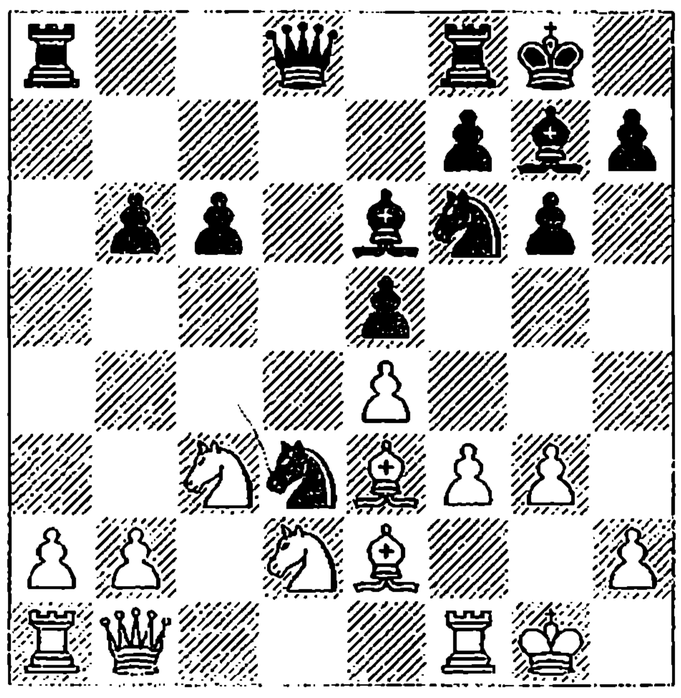
12...♘d3

12...♕d7!? deserved attention, planning to support the advanced knight with a rook from d8.

13 g3! b6

What else? After 13...♘xb2? 14 ♕c2 Black simply loses a knight. 13...♗h3 14 ♕b3! favours White, as does 13...♕d7 14 ♕c2!.

14 cxb6 axb6 15 ♕b1! *(D)*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A strong move, which secures White an advantage.

15...♘f4

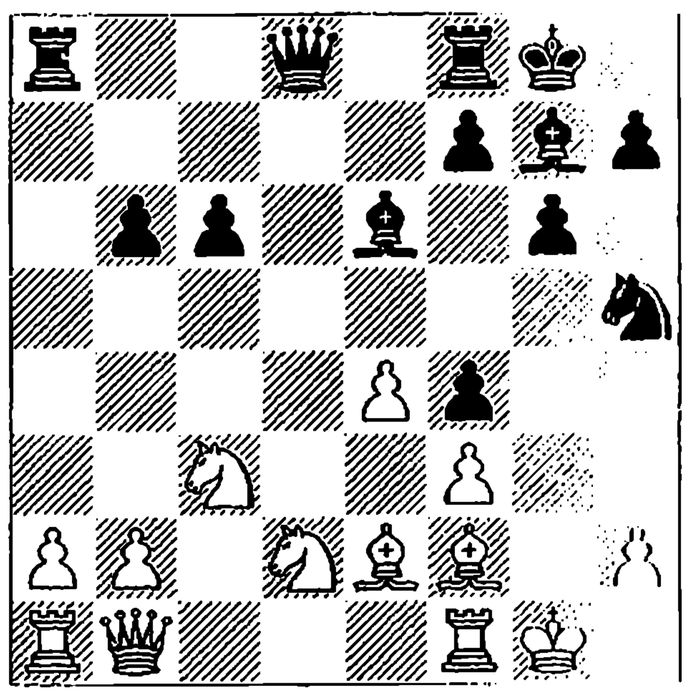
After 15...♘b4 or 15...♘c5 White is at least somewhat better and so I opted for an interesting knight sacrifice. It may not be entirely correct, but gives Black possibilities for active play.

16 gxf4 exf4 17 ♗f2!

17 ♗xf4? ♕d4+! 18 ♔h1 ♘h5 is good for Black.

17...♘h5 *(D)*

Not 17...♕xd2? 18 ♖d1 and the queen is trapped. 17...♗h3 18 ♖d1 ♘d5 19 ♕b1 is in White's favour (Hébert).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18 ♕c2

An inaccuracy. 18 ♖d1 ♕g5+ 19 ♔h1 ♘g3+ 20 ♔e1 ♘h1 21 ♘b3 ♘xf2 22 ♔xf2 ♗xb3 23 axb3 ♗d4+ 24 ♖xd4 ♕c5 25 ♖aa4 ♘xa4 26 bxa4 ♕xd4+ 27 ♔f1 ♖d8 would lead to an unclear position (Hébert), but 18 ♕e1! is stronger, when Black probably has nothing better than 18...♗h3, winning the exchange – which would hardly solve all his problems.

18...♖a5! 19 ♔h1

Other moves are much worse. As an illustrative line, Hébert gives 19 ♖fd1? ♗d4! 20 ♗xd4 ♕xd4+ 21 ♔f1 ♖g5 22 ♔e1 ♖g2 23 ♘f1 ♕h4 24 ♔d2 ♗c4 25 ♔c1 ♗xe2 26 ♕xe2 ♕xe2 27 ♘xe2 ♖xe2.

19...♘g3+ 20 ♗xg3

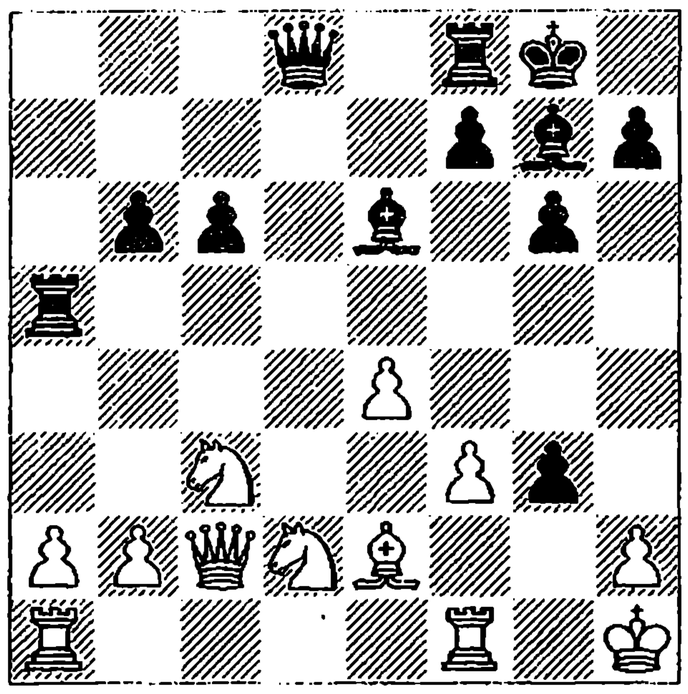
20 hxg3? ♖h5+ is very dangerous for White.

20...fxg3 *(D)*

21 ♖g1

21 hxg3 ♖h5+ 22 ♔g2 ♗h3+ 23 ♔f1 ♖h1+ 24 ♔e1 ♗xf1 25 ♘xf1 (Hébert) results in a position where White's material advantage (two knights versus a rook) does not

W



ensure him an advantage, because his king is potentially vulnerable and Black's pieces are quite active.

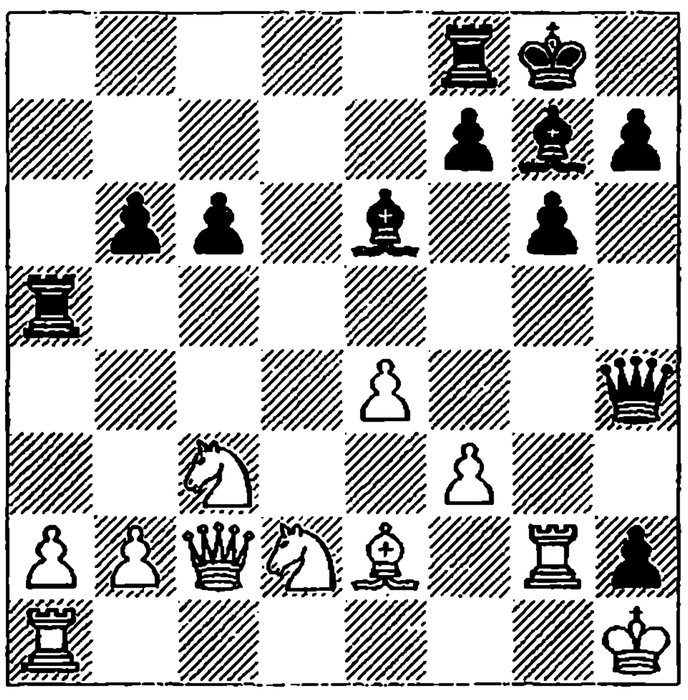
21...gxh2

I seriously considered also 21...♗e5 but decided that 22 ♘c4 ♕h4 23 ♗d3 ♗xc4 24 ♗xc4 ♗xc3 25 bxc3 ♖c5 26 ♗b3 ♖xc3 27 ♕g2 ♖xf3 28 ♖gf1 ♖e3 29 ♖ae1 ♖xe1 30 ♖xe1 is better for White.

22 ♖g2 ♕h4 *(D)*

22...♖g5!? could have been answered by 23 ♗f1 ♖xg2 24 ♗xg2 with similarly unclear compensation for Black as in the game.

W



23 ♘c4!?

It is understandable that White does not like to grab the pawn which protects his own king. 23 ♖xh2 ♕f4! would lead to an unclear position with serious counterchances for Black; [illegible] ♔g1 ♕xh2+!? 25 ♔xh2 ♖h5+ 26 ♔g2 ♖g5+ 27 ♔f1 ♗h3+ 28 ♔f2 ♗d4+ 29 ♔e1 ♖xg1+ 30 ♗f1 ♗f6 (Hébert) and here 31 ♔f2 ♗d4+ 32 ♔e1 with a repetition of moves seems to be a reasonable choice for White.

23...♖g5!

After 23...♖h5?! White gets a clear advantage by 24 f4! ♗xc4 25 ♗xc4 ♕xf4 26 ♖f1, attacking the f7-pawn.

24 ♖xg5

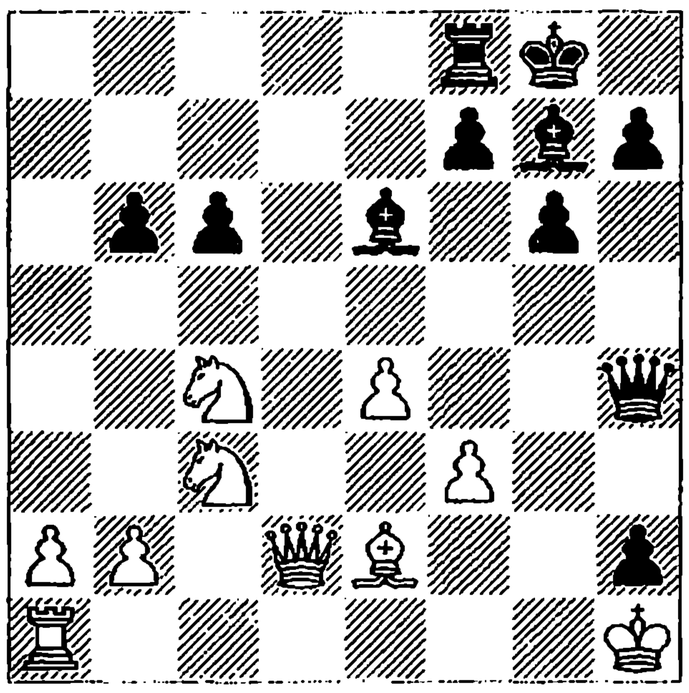
Here capturing the pawn by 24 ♖xh2 would again give Black serious counterchances after 24...♕g3!.

24...♕xg5 25 ♕d2 ♕h4 26 ♕e1 ♕f4 27 ♕d2

27 ♘xb6? ♗d4! favours Black.

27...♕h4 *(D)*

W



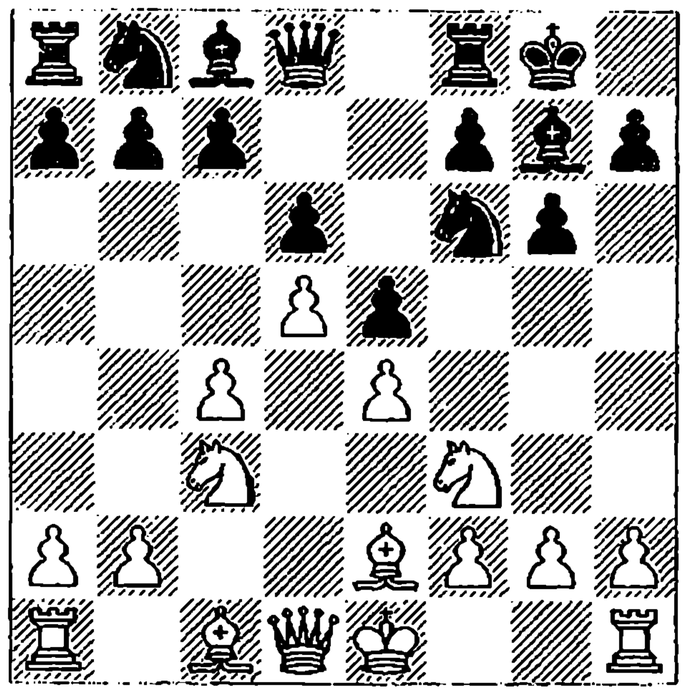
28 ♕e1

White decides to end this friendly game in a friendly manner – by repetition of moves. His advantage is hard to prove. For example, 28 a4 ♖d8 29 ♕e1 ♕g5 30 ♕f2 (weaker is 30 ♕f1?! b5! 31 axb5 cxb5 32 ♘a5 ♖d2 – Hébert) 30...♗d4 31 ♕xh2 ♕c5 32 ♕h4! f6! 33 ♘a3 (33 e5!? ♗xc4 and Black is ready to sacrifice his queen after 34 ♘e4 ♗xe2! 35 ♘xc5 ♗xf3+) 33...♗xc3 34 bxc3 ♖d2 35 ♕xf6 ♕h5+ 36 ♔g1 ♕c5+ with a draw by perpetual check. Another line, given by Hébert, is 28 ♖d1 b5 29 ♘a5 b4 30 ♘b1 c5 31 ♘c4 ♗d4! with sufficient compensation for Black.

28...♕f4 29 ♕d2 ½-½

4 Classical: 7 d5

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 5 ♘f3 0-0 6 ♗e2 e5 7 d5 *(D)*



B

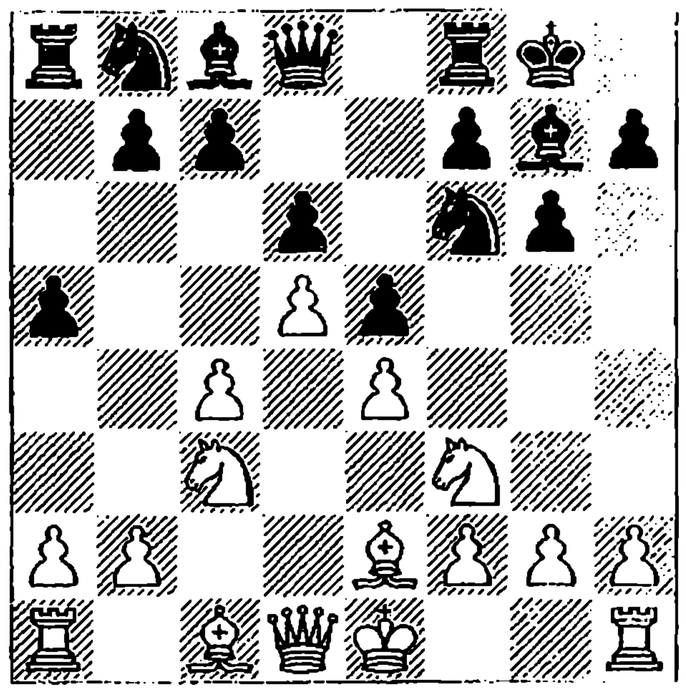
7 d5 is known as the Petrosian System. It is considered to be less critical than White's two other main continuations (7 0-0 and 7 ♗e3) but nevertheless has its inner logic and cannot be called innocuous. White simply fixes the centre, preventing ...♘c6, and hopes to exploit his space advantage. In the mid-1990s, 7 d5 was Kramnik's main anti-King's Indian weapon – with its help he managed to defeat Kasparov twice! The play here has a less forcing character in comparison with the other main lines of the Classical, but decades of practical testing have defined the main paths quite clearly. Black's main and most flexible continuation is considered to be 7...a5!, preparing ...♘a6, which creates obstacles for White's queenside assault, as it makes it harder for him to achieve the b4 advance. At the same time, ...a5 and ...♘a6 will allow the black minor pieces to operate with maximum possible harmony, without getting in each other's way. In the following games I shall consider 7...a5 and, in less detail, the main alternatives to this move. Sometimes it makes practical sense to deviate from the main line. Perhaps you are not confident in your preparation, or expect that your opponent will feel more comfortable in the standard lines. Surprise is often a potent factor over the board.

Game 18

A. Shneider – Golubev

Ukraine Young Masters (Kharkov) 1984

1 d4 g6 2 c4 ♗g7 3 ♘f3 d6 4 ♘c3 ♘f6 5 e4 0-0 6 ♗e2 e5 7 d5 a5 *(D)*



W

8 ♗g5

This is White's main move, but 8 0-0 ♘a6 9 ♗g5 often leads to the same positions.

8 ♗e3 is answered by 8...♘g4! 9 ♗g5 f6 10 ♗h4 ♘a6!. Black's pieces are coordinated well, and practice has shown that he has good chances. After 11 ♘d2 he can continue 11...h5! 12 a3 ♗d7, as in Petrosian-Geller, Sochi (Chigorin mem) 1977.

In the 1990s, the young Russian grandmaster Vadim Zviagintsev successfully employed another idea: 8 h3!?, preserving the possibility of an early g4. Most often Black continues 8...♘a6 (instead, 8...♕e8 gave Black excellent play after 9 ♗e3 ♘h5 10 ♘d2 ♘f4 11 ♗f1 f5 12 g3 ♘h5 13 exf5 gxf5 14 ♗e2 ♘f6 15 f4 ♘a6 16 ♘f3 exf4 17 ♗xf4 ♘h5 18 ♕d2 ♘c5 in Kramnik-Ivanchuk, Moscow PCA rpd 1995, but I suspect that 9 g4!? is stronger; in the game Zviagintsev-Beliavsky, Yugoslavia 1995, 8...♘fd7 was parried by 9 h4! f5 10 h5 ♘f6 11 hxg6 hxg6 12 ♗g5 with the better position for White due to Black's weakened kingside) 9 ♗g5 and now:

a) The 'automatic' 9...♕e8 is a rather unnecessary move in this specific variation: 10 g4 (another possibility is 10 ♘d2) and then:

a1) 10...♘d7 11 ♖g1 ♘dc5 12 h4! c6 13 h5 cxd5 14 h6! ♗h8 15 cxd5 ♗d7 16 a4! was better for White in Piket-J.Polgar, Aruba (1) 1995.

a2) 10...♔h8 11 ♘d2 ♘g8 12 h4 f6! 13 ♗e3 f5 14 f3! was Matros-Nataf, Stockholm (Rilton Cup) 1999. Here, according to Matros, the typical exchange sacrifice 14...fxg4!? 15 fxg4 ♖f4 deserved attention. However, I wonder what Black would do with his g8-knight if White declined the offer and played 16 g5!?.

a3) 10...♘c5 11 ♘d2 c6 (not entirely logical in conjunction with ...♕e8, but the same can be said about 11...h6 12 ♗e3 ♘h7) 12 ♕c2! ♗d7 13 ♗e3. White is at least slightly better, and after the anti-positional 13...b6?! 14 ♖g1 ♕e7 15 h4 cxd5 16 g5! ♘e8 17 ♘xd5 ♕d8 18 h5 ♖b8 19 ♘b1! ♘c7 20 ♘xc7! ♕xc7 21 ♘c3 ♗c6 22 0-0-0 he was strategically winning in N.Ostojić-Golubev, Kiev (Platonov mem) 1995, even though Black was later lucky to create some illusory counterplay and escape with a draw in mutual time-trouble.

b) 9...h6 10 ♗e3 ♘c5 11 ♘d2 ♘h7 12 g4 (12 h4 h5 13 ♘b3 b6 seems to be playable for Black, Zviagintsev-Nevednichy, Yugoslav Cht (Tivat) 1995) 12...f5 13 gxf5 (after 13 ♕c2 Black could try 13...♘a6!?) 13...gxf5 14 ♕c2 ♘g5 (here both 14...♘a6!? 15 f3 f4, and 14...♘e6!?, with the idea 15 dxe6 f4, regaining the piece, deserve attention) 15 ♗xc5 dxc5 16 h4 ♘xe4 17 ♘dxe4 fxe4 18 ♘xe4 ♖f4 19 0-0-0 ♗f5 20 ♗d3 with a complex position, which is possibly slightly better for White, N.Ostojić-Frolov, Kiev (Platonov mem) 1995.

c) The most solid option for Black probably is 9...♘c5 10 ♘d2 ♗d7 (a kind of waiting move) 11 0-0 (if 11 g4, then 11...c6, starting counterplay on the queenside without weakening the kingside) 11...h6 12 ♗e3 ♘h7 with decent play for Black, as in Krasenkow-Radjabov, Wijk aan Zee 2003 and other games.

8...h6

This is Black's main answer, and deservedly so. After 8...♘a6 or 8...♘bd7 Black's problem is not 9 ♕d2?! (preventing ...h6) because 9...♘c5 attacks e4, but 9 ♘d2! ensuring the possible retreat 10 ♗c3 after 9...h6.

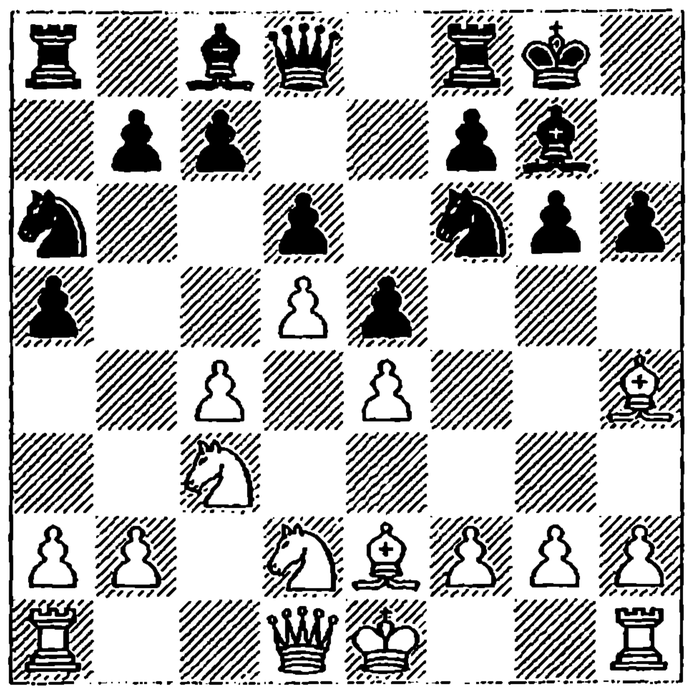
9 ♗h4

Now 9 ♗e3 would be met by 9...♘g4!, most likely followed by 10...f5.

9...♘a6 10 ♘d2 *(D)*

After 10 ♕c2 Black, according to Glek, can try 10...g5 11 ♗g3 ♘h5 with counterplay.

B



10...♕e8!

This is Black's main continuation, and was first used in the game Petrosian-Stein, USSR Cht (Moscow) 1967. At the same time, ...♗d7 is also a part of Black's plan, so he can begin with this move: 10...♗d7 11 0-0 and now:

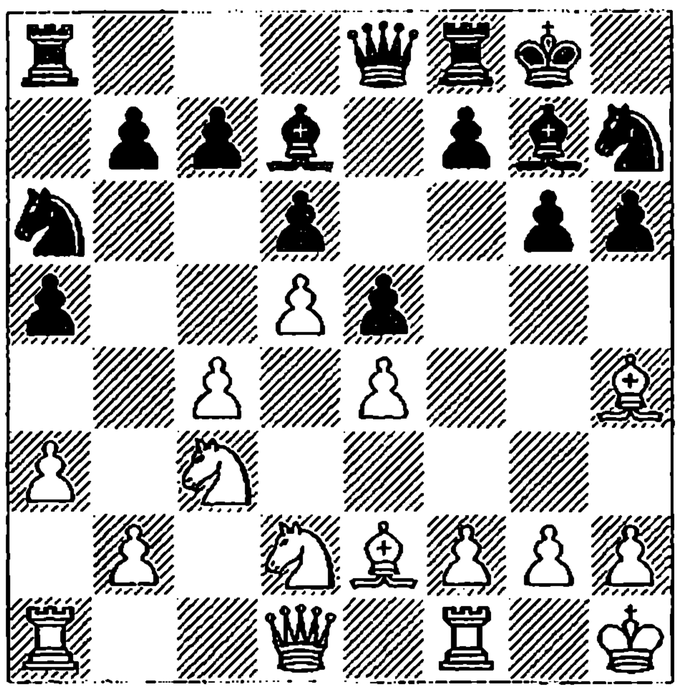
a) 11...♘c5!? (Black usually delays this move) 12 b3 (the most common move, but there are numerous alternatives for White, such as 12 ♖b1) and then:

a1) 12...♕e8 13 a3 ♘h7 and now 14 f3 h5 15 ♖b1 ♗h6 16 ♗f2 ♕e7 17 ♕c2 h4 18 b4 axb4 19 axb4 ♘a4 20 ♖a1 ♘xc3 21 ♕xc3 ♕g5 22 ♖fd1 ♘f6 23 ♘f1 ♘h5 24 ♗e3 ♘f4 25 ♗xf4 exf4 is an example of unsuccessful play for White. In Smirnov-Golubev, Dnepropetrovsk jr 1983 Black exploited his large advantage and won quickly. But on the 14th move, 14 b4! is better, when White has a slight advantage.

a2) The queen sacrifice 12...♘fxe4!? is both interesting and logical. After 13 ♗xd8 ♘xc3 14 ♕e1 ♖fxd8 Black has at least good practical compensation, Kramnik-Kasparov, Munich (Intel) blitz 1994.

b) 11...♕e8 (the main move) 12 ♔h1 (the stem game Petrosian-Stein, USSR Cht (Moscow) 1967 continued 12 b3 ♘h7 13 f3 h5 14 ♗f2 ♗h6 15 a3 ♕e7 16 ♕c2 h4 with good prospects for Black on the kingside) 12...♘h7 13 a3!? *(D)* (or 12 a3 ♘h7 13 ♔h1) is Kramnik's idea: White is trying to do without b3 and he is ready to allow ...a4.

B



Now:

b1) After 13...a4 14 ♘b5 ♗xb5 15 cxb5 ♘c5 16 f3 f5 17 ♗f2 White definitely has some advantage, Illescas-Frolov, Biel IZ 1993.

b2) 13...f5 14 exf5 gxf5 15 ♗h5 ♕c8 16 ♗e7 ♖e8 was Beckhuis-Golubev, Biel open 1995, where White played 17 ♗h4 and after 17...♖f8 the game ended in a draw by repetition; of course, the critical line is 17 ♗xe8 ♕xe8 18 ♗h4, when I planned to play 18...e4 with unclear compensation for the exchange.

b3) 13...h5 14 f3 ♗f6!? (instead of the more standard 14...♗h6) 15 ♗f2 (15 ♗xf6 ♘xf6 16 b3 ♕e7 17 ♕e1 ♔g7 is approximately equal, Gulko-Kasparov, Novgorod 1995) 15...♗g5 16 b3 ♕e7 17 ♖b1 h4 18 b4 axb4 19 axb4 ♘f6! 20 c5 dxc5! 21 ♗xa6 cxb4 22 ♗xb7 bxc3 23 ♗xa8 cxd2 with enough compensation for the exchange, Golod-Mittelman, Beersheba open 1998.

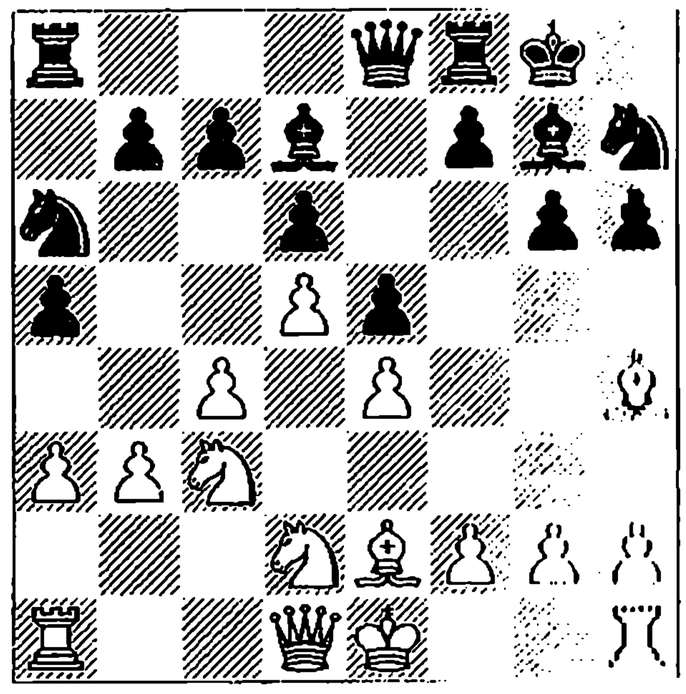
11 a3

The most standard continuation is 11 0-0 ♘h7 (or first 11...♗d7), which leads to positions considered in the previous note.

Quite often, however, White delays castling. After 11 ♕c2 Black can continue his main plan by 11...♘h7. In P.Perruchoud-Golubev, Martigny open 1995 he instead opted for 11...♘d7 12 a3! f5 13 f3 ♘f6 14 ♖b1 g5?! 15 ♗f2 f4?! 16 b4 axb4 17 axb4 g4 18 c5! and White's queenside attack turned out to be dangerous, while it is really hard for Black to create threats against White's king. 18...♕g6 19 cxd6 cxd6 20 ♘c4 g3 21 hxg3 fxg3 22 ♗e3 ♘h5 23 ♘b6 ♖b8 24 ♘b5 ♘f4 25 ♗xf4 exf4 26 ♘a7!. Now White simply wins material. The rest of the game once again confirms how many resources can be found even in an objectively bad King's Indian position. 26...♗g4 (what else could Black do with that miserable doubly attacked bishop?) 27 fxg4 ♖be8 28 ♗f3 ♖xe4+ 29 ♔xe4 ♖e8 30 ♔f1 ♖xe4 31 ♕c8+ ♔h7 32 ♕f5 ♘xb5 33 ♖e1?! (33 ♘b5!) 33...♖xe1+ 34 ♔xe1 ♗d4 35 ♕xg6+ ♔xg6 36 ♘ac8 f3 37 ♔f1 ♘e3+ 38 ♘c4? (38 gxf3 still retains good chances for a win) 38...b5 39 ♘8xd6 bxc4 40 ♘xc4 ♘e1+ 41 ♘e5+ ♗xe5 42 ♔xe1 fxg2 43 ♖g1 ♔g5 44 ♖xg2 ♔xg4 45 ♔f1 ♔h3 and White secured a draw by 46 d6 ♗xd6 47 ♖xg3+. It can be added that my opponent, Pierre Perruchoud, was the organizer of the tournament.

11...♗d7 12 b3 ♘h7 *(D)*

W



13 ♖b1

13 0-0 is also a very natural move. 13...♘h7 (13...h5 14 f3 ♗h6 15 ♖b1 transposes to the main game) 14 exf5 (14 f3 involves some risk because Black's kingside attack can become dangerous) and here:

a) 14...gxf5!? 15 ♗h5 ♕c8 16 ♗e7 ♖e8 17 ♗xe8 ♕xe8 18 ♗h4 e4 19 ♖c1 (19 ♕c2?! ♕h5 20 ♗g3 ♖f8!, Yusupov-Kasparov, Barcelona (World Cup) 1989) 19...♘c5 20 ♖c2 is a controversial position, where it is not entirely clear whether Black's compensation for the exchange after 20...♘f8 or 20...♕g6 is fully sufficient.

b) A sound alternative is 14...♔xf5 15 ♖b1 16 ♖c1 e3! 17 fxe3 ♕xe3+ 18 ♔f2 ♕g5 Khenkin-Shirov, Borzhomi jr 1988. It is not clear whether White has anything stronger than 19 h4 ♕f4 20 gxf5 ♗e5 21 ♘f3 ♕g4 22 ♖hf1 ♕h3+ 23 ♔g1 ♕g4+ with a draw by repetition.

13...h5

In accordance with Stein's standard plan. Other moves are relatively rare. After 13...♘h7 14 f3 ♘f6 (14...♘c5!?) 15 ♗f2 ♘e5 16 ♕c2 ♖e8 17 ♘dxe4 a draw was agreed in Lemmers-Golubev, Skopje 1991, but perhaps White has

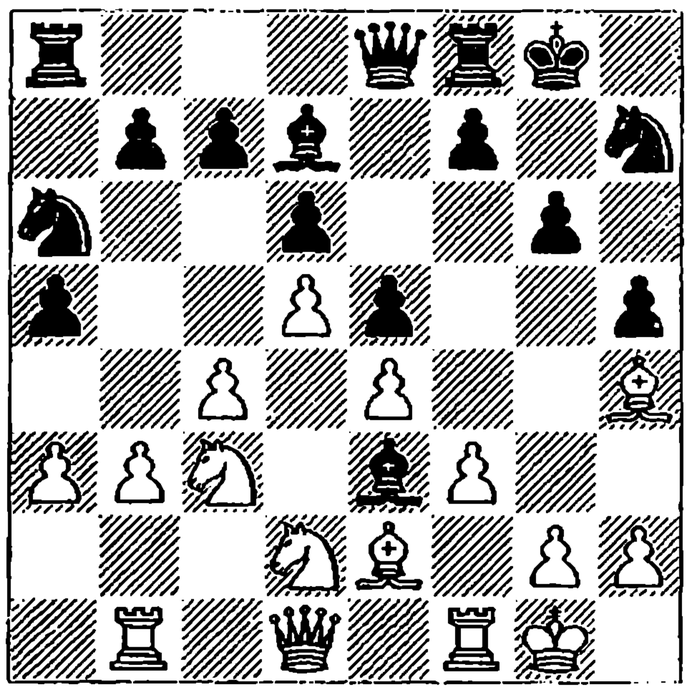
minimal advantage. Also playable is 13...g5!? 14 ♗g3 f5 15 exf5 ♗xf5 16 ♘de4 ♘f6, as in Zilberman-Nunn, London (Lloyds Bank) 1994.

14 f3 ♗h6 15 0-0

15 ♗f2 ♕e7 has also been tested dozens of times, and gives Black decent play.

15...♗e3+ *(D)*

W



16 ♗f2

16 ♔h1 is also possible, but here after 16...♗c5 White must spend time defending his a3-pawn, and after 17 ♕c1 c6!? practice has shown that Black is no worse.

16...♗xf2+

16...♗c5 is a playable alternative.

17 ♖xf2 ♕e7 18 b4 axb4 19 axb4 h4 20 ♘f1!?

19 years later, the game Vallejo-Cvitan, Plovdiv Echt 2003 continued 20 ♕c1!?, and after 20...♖fb8?! 21 c5! dxc5 22 b5 ♘b4 23 ♘c4, White had excellent compensation for the pawn. He has positional threats of both 24 b6 and 24 f4. According to Avrukh, Black should prevent the pawn sacrifice by 20...c5!, with reasonable chances.

20...♘f6 21 ♗d3

21 f4 exf4 22 ♖xf4 ♕e5 23 ♕d2 leads to a complicated position with mutual chances. Both sides have some problems coordinating their pieces. Note that 24 ♖xh4 is not a threat because 24...g5 25 ♖h6 ♔g7 traps the rook.

21...♘h5 22 ♘e2 *(D)*

Covering f4.

22...♖fb8?!

The introduction to a wrong and over-optimistic plan based around ...b5. Instead, 22...c5!? 23 dxc6 bxc6 is correct; then Black's chances are no worse.

23 ♕d2 b5

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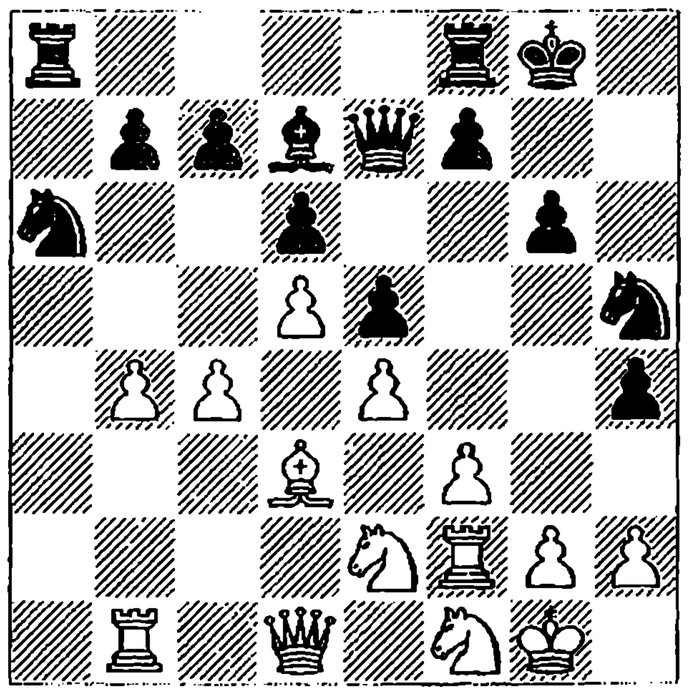


Even here it was probably not too late to play 23...c5!?.

24 ♖a1!

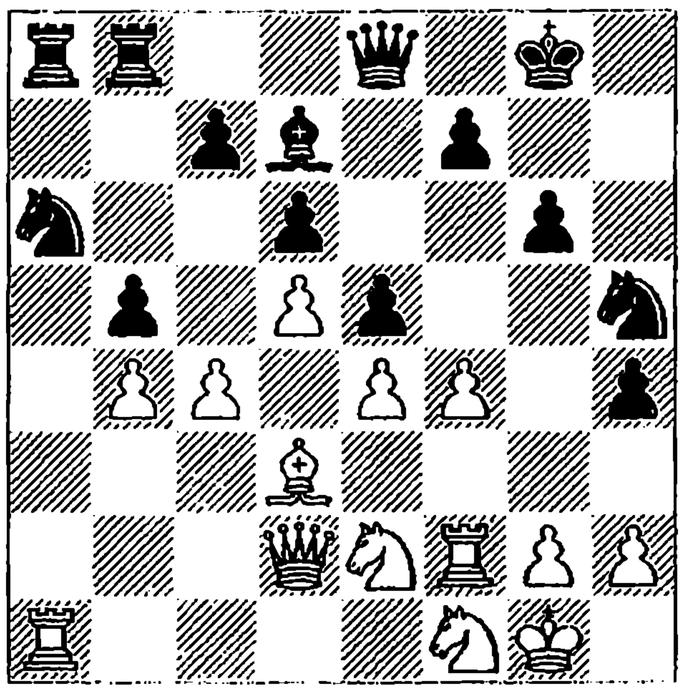
This strong move underlines the drawbacks of Black's idea. Now his queen must be brought into the struggle on the queenside:

24...♕e8

However, this results in a serious weakening of Black's kingside and meets a natural and strong reaction:

25 f4! *(D)*

B

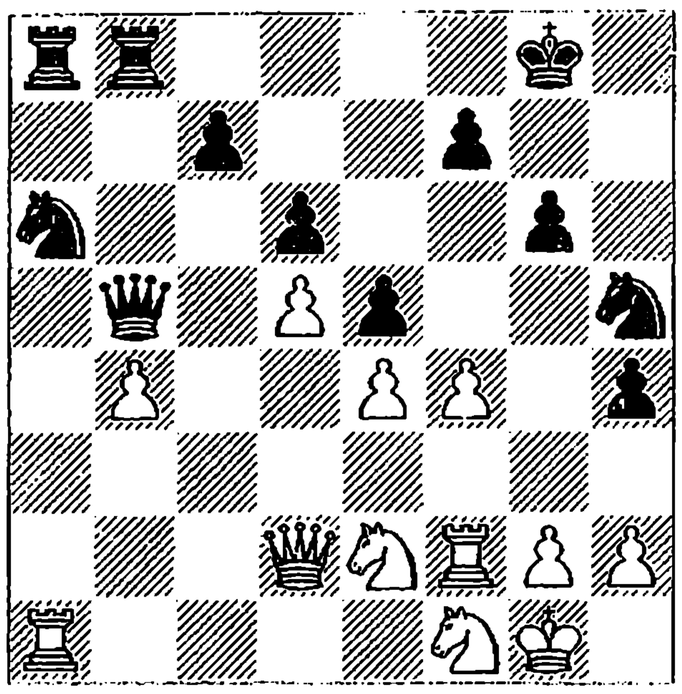


The subsequent notes will show that White has now definitely taken the upper hand.

25...bxc4

Black could also have tried the less ambitious 25...♘xf4!? 26 ♘xf4 exf4 with chances to escape after, say, 27 ♖a5!? (27 cxb5 ♗xb5 28 ♗xb5 ♖xb5 29 ♕xf4 ♖xb4 30 ♖fa2 ♖xe4 31 ♕f3 ♖e1 32 ♖xe1 ♕xe1 33 ♕d3 ♕e5 34 ♖xa6 ♖xa6 35 ♕xa6 ♕xd5 36 ♕c8+ ♔h7 37 ♕xc7 ♕d4+ 38 ♔h1 and now 38...♕f4! = is the equalizer) 27...h3 28 gxh3 c5 29 dxc6 ♗xc6 30 cxb5 ♗xb5 31 ♗xb5 ♖xb5 32 ♖xb5 ♕xb5 33 ♕xf4 ♖a7. Similarly, after 25...exf4, the most unpleasant move for Black seems to be 26 ♖a5!?.

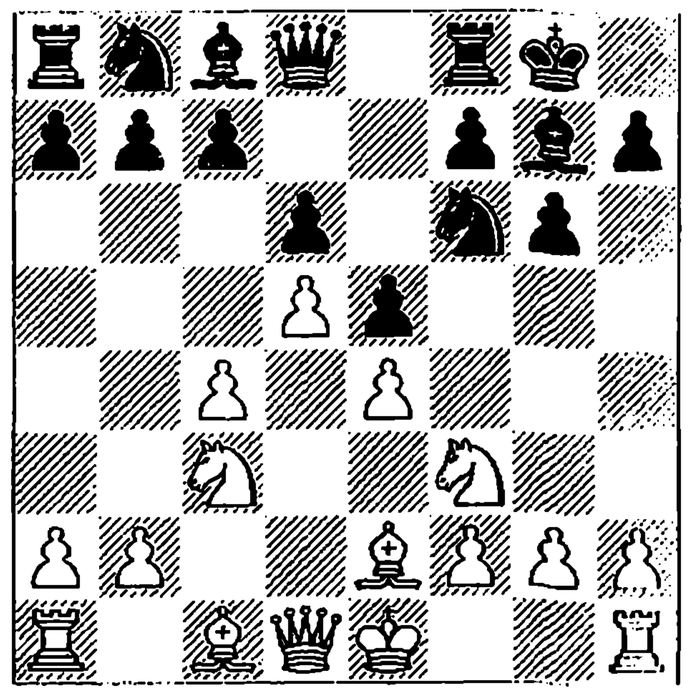
26 ♗xc4 ♗b5 27 ♗xb5 ♕xb5 *(D)*



I believe this was my only win in the King's Indian against someone who (later) managed to beat Kasparov in this opening.

Game 19
D. Gurevich – Golubev
Geneva open 1993

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 5 ♗e2 0-0 6 ♘f3 e5 7 d5 *(D)*



7...♘bd7

This is the second most popular move, after 7...a5.

After 7...♘a6 White's strongest answer is considered to be 8 ♘d2! – see the next game.

7...♘h5 8 g3! is known to be a pleasant line for White, who is ready to meet 8...f5 by 9 exf5 gxf5 10 ♘xe5 ♘xg3 11 hxg3 dxe5 12 ♗h6.

An extremely rare but interesting idea, which I once used, is 7...♕e8!?. It is a good surprise weapon which can still transpose to better-known variations. 8 h3 (8 0-0 transposes to another rare line, 7 0-0 ♕e8 8 d5) 8...♘h5 (8...a5!? is the same as 7...a5 8 h3 ♕e8). Now:

a) Parulava-Golubev, Eupen open 1997 continued 9 g3 f5 10 ♘d2 ♘f6 11 g4!? ♘a6 12 ♖g1 (the position can be evaluated as double-edged) 12...fxg4!? 13 hxg4 ♕f7 14 ♖g2 h6 15 ♘f1 ♘c5 16 ♘g3 a5 17 ♗e3 ♘h7 18 ♕d2 ♘g5! (this pawn sacrifice is preferable to 18...g6? which weakens the f5-square and leads to a strategically inferior position for Black) 19 ♗xg5 hxg5 20 ♕xg5 ♗d7 21 ♕e3 ♕f4 22 g5 ♖f7 23 ♘f1 ♖af8 and Black had sufficient compensation for the pawn.

b) Stronger is 9 ♘h2!, transposing to a variation that we shall consider later: 5 ♘f3 0-0 6

28 fxe5?

A major error. White's advantage could have been kept only by 28 f5!, starting an attack on the kingside. 28...♘xb4 (28...♕xb4? simply loses: 29 fxg6 fxg6 30 ♕h6 ♕xe4 31 ♘d2! ♕xd5 32 ♕xg6+ ♘g7 33 ♘e4 ♖f8 34 ♘2c3!, etc.) 29 ♖xa8 (29 ♖b1 is parried by 29...♕c5!) 29...♖xa8 30 fxg6 fxg6 and now, for example, 31 ♕h6!? ♕e8 32 g4 ♘d3!? (or 32...hxg3 33 ♘fxg3 ♖a1+ 34 ♔g2 ♘f4+ 35 ♘xf4 exf4 36 ♖xf4 ♘d3 37 ♖h4 ♖a2+ 38 ♔g1 ♖a1+ 39 ♘f1) 33 gxh5 ♘xf2 34 ♔xf2 results in a position where Black is struggling for a draw.

28...dxe5 29 ♕g5 ♘xb4 30 ♖xa8 ♖xa8

Now Black can easily defend his kingside, and his pieces are active enough to maintain the dynamic balance. In time-trouble White gradually lost his orientation:

31 ♕e7 ♖f8 32 ♕xc7 ♘d3 33 ♖f3 ♘c5! 34 ♘c3 ♕c4 35 ♔h1

35 ♖e3!? ♘f6 36 h3 is safer.

35...♕d4 36 ♘b5 ♕b4 37 ♘a7?

A big mistake. Now Black gains the possibility of creating an attack, even without the participation of his passive rook.

37...♘xe4 38 ♕xe5 ♕b1! 39 ♘c6

Or 39 ♕d4 ♘hg3+!.

39...♘d2 40 ♘e7+ ♔h7 41 ♘xg6?!

This is insufficient, but otherwise White is simply an exchange down after 41 ♕e2 ♘xf3, etc.

41...♔xg6

41...♘xf1! would have decided the game more quickly.

42 ♕d6+ f6 43 ♕xf8 ♘xf3 44 ♕e8+ ♔g7 45 ♕e7+ ♔h6 46 ♕e3+

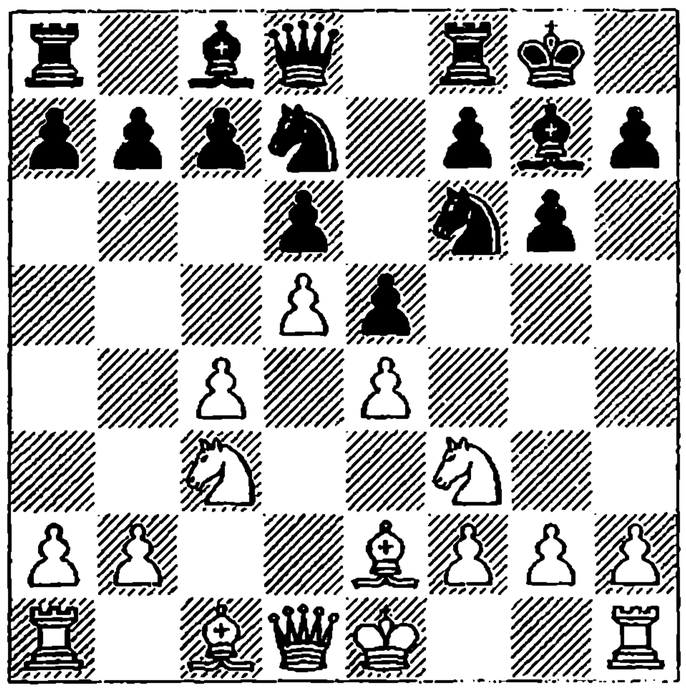
Or 46 ♕f8+ ♔h7 47 ♕e7+ ♘g7.

46...♘g5 47 ♔g1 ♕d1 48 ♕c5 ♔g6 49 d6 ♘f4 50 ♕b4 ♘gh3+! 51 gxh3 ♕f3 0-1

h3 e5 7 d5 ♘h5 8 ♘h2 ♕e8 9 ♗e2 (see Game 24).

We now return to 7...♘bd7 *(D)*:

W



8 ♗e3!?

Possibly the strongest. Other moves:

a) 8 0-0 ♘c5! 9 ♕c2 a5 10 ♗g5 h6 11 ♗e3 b6 is a well-known classical line where Black has reasonable play. Thanks to ♕c2, which he provoked, after 12 ♘d2 the g4-square is available for Black's pieces and he usually chooses between 12...♘g4 and 12...♗g4.

b) Statistically, the main line is the sharp 8 ♗g5 h6 9 ♗h4 g5 10 ♗g3 ♘h5 11 h4 (11 ♘d2 ♘f4 12 0-0 f5 13 exf5 ♘xe2+ 14 ♕xe2 ♘f6 with a playable position for Black) 11...g4 12 ♘h2 ♘xg3 (12...f5!? is an important alternative) 13 fxg3 h5 (13...f5!? 14 exf5 h5) 14 0-0 f5! and now:

b1) Kramnik-Kasparov, Linares 1994 continued 15 exf5 ♘c5 16 b4 e4 17 ♖c1 (17 f6!?) 17...♘d3 18 ♗xd3 exd3 19 f6 ♖xf6 20 ♕xd3 ♕f8! with sufficient counterchances for Black.

b2) 15 ♖xf5 (!? Kramnik) 15...♖xf5 16 exf5 ♘c5 (16...♘f6 could be preferred) 17 ♕d2 ♗xf5 18 ♖f1 ♕f6?! (18...♗g6!? 19 b4 ♘d7 20 ♗d3 e4! 21 ♘xe4 ♘e5 22 ♘f2 ♕e8) 19 ♘xg4 ♕g6 20 ♘e3 with better chances for White (Lyrberg-Bologan, Oslo open 1994), because 20...♗h6 is answered by 21 ♘xf5 ♗xd2 22 ♘e7+.

8...♘c5

This is insufficient for equality. Black can be advised to go for the principled 8...♘g4! 9 ♗g5 f6 10 ♗h4 *(D)*.

Then:

a) 10...h5 11 ♘d2 (11 h3 ♘h6 12 ♘d2 was later tried in Kasparov-Vescovi, Rio de Janeiro simul 1996 where Black's creative pawn

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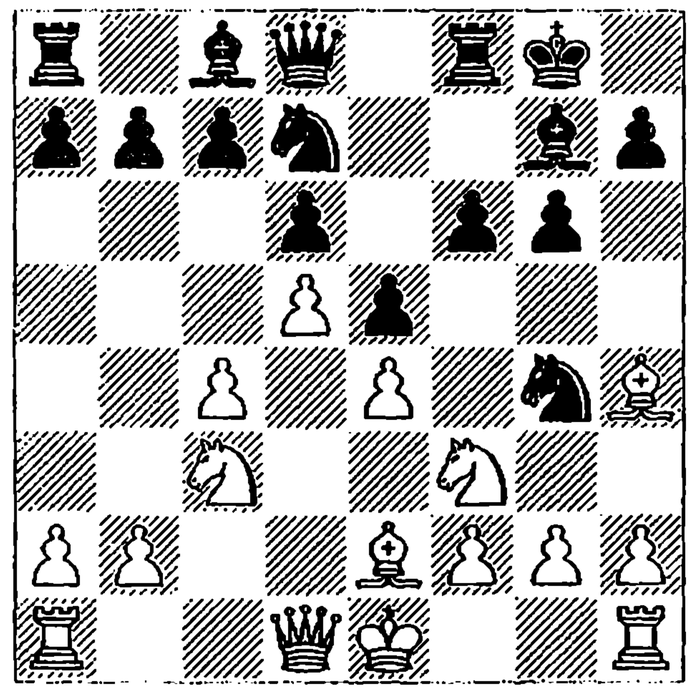


sacrifice 12...g5 13 ♗g3 f5?! 14 ♗xh5 f4 15 ♗h2 ♘f6 16 ♗f3 did not give him full compensation after 16...c6 17 ♗g1 cxd5 18 cxd5 ♗d7 19 ♗e2 a6 20 f3 ♘h5 21 ♗f2, etc.) 11...♘h6 12 f3 ♘f7 13 ♕c2 ♗h6 14 0-0-0 c5. Instead of 15 dxc6 bxc6 with unclear play (Kramnik-Kasparov, Moscow PCA rpd 1994), according to Kramnik White should play 15 ♔b1 with some advantage.

b) Black also has the calmer 10...♘h6, which has been tested many times in practice.

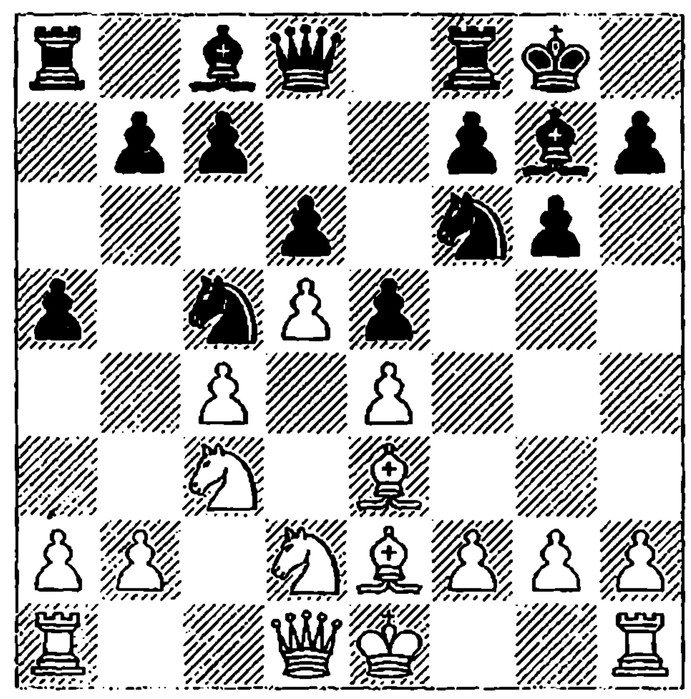
I suspect that White is somewhat better in these lines (...♘d7 in conjunction with ...♘g4 almost always fails to impress), but White's advantage is less obvious here than after 8...♘c5, to which we now return.

9 ♘d2

White has achieved the ideal arrangement of his minor pieces (and even without the inclusion of h3, which slightly weakens the kingside).

9...a5 *(D)*

W



10 a3

Another good continuation for White is 10 g4!?.

10...♘e8

Zviagintsev-Varavin, Russian Ch (Elista) 1996 continued 10...♗d7 11 b4 axb4 12 axb4 ♖xa1 13 ♕xa1 and here Black desperately sacrificed a knight: 13...♘cxe4?! 14 ♘dxe4 ♘xe4 15 ♘xe4 f5. Zviagintsev calmly responded with 16 ♕a7! (much clearer than 16 ♗g5 ♕e8 17 ♘c3 f4 18 f3 e4!) and after 16...♕h4?! (Black should regain the piece by 16...fxe4 even though after 17 ♕xb7 he is obviously worse) 17 ♘c3 e4 18 ♘d1 f4 19 g3 White won easily.

11 0-0

The straightforward 11 b4! is even more critical: 11...axb4 12 axb4 ♖xa1 13 ♕xa1 ♘a6 14 ♕a3 f5 15 ♘b3! (rather than 15 f3?! ♗h6 with the typical idea 16 ♗xh6 ♕h4+) and, for example, in Zivanić-D.Popović, Yugoslav U-18 Ch (Obrenovac) 2002 Black faced problems after 15...♘f6 16 b5 ♘b8 17 c5!.

11...f5 12 f3 a4!

Maybe Black could try the risky 12...f4!? 13 ♗f2 ♕g5 14 ♔h1 (14 ♖e1 ♗h3 15 ♗f1 ♘d3!) 14...♘f6 with the idea ...♘h5.

13 b4

White declines the offer. 13 ♗xc5 dxc5 14 ♘xa4 ♗h6! would give Black a lot of play.

13...axb3 14 ♘xb3 ♘xb3 15 ♕xb3 b6

15...f4!? deserves attention, forcing White to clarify where the bishop will go. After 16 ♗d2 Black could continue 16...♔h8, trying to do without ...b6.

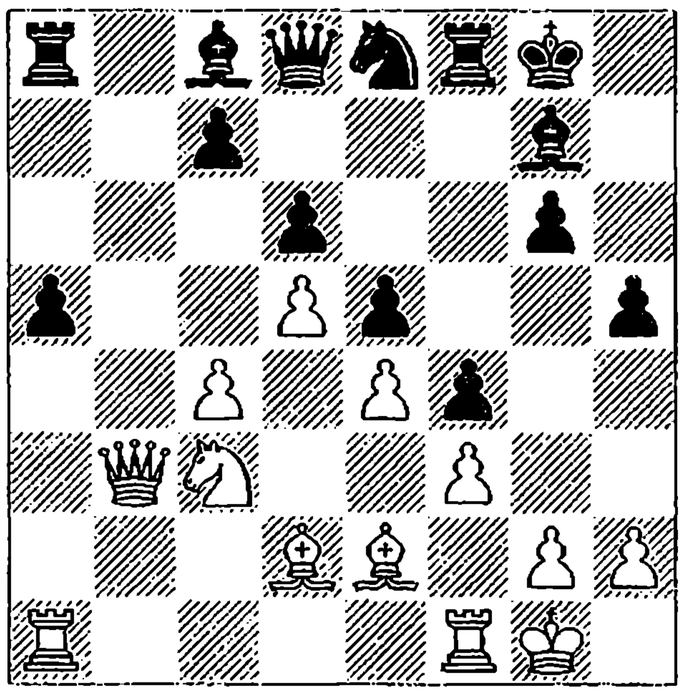
16 a4 f4?!

Here 16...♘f6 should be preferred.

17 ♗d2!

Much stronger than 17 ♗f2 g5!.

17...h5 18 a5 bxa5 *(D)*



W

19 ♘d1!

An impressive move, which clarifies White's advantage. The knight goes to f2, from where it will prevent ...g4. At the same time, White's pressure on the queenside becomes very unpleasant.

19...a4 20 ♖xa4 ♖xa4 21 ♕xa4 g5 22 ♘f2 ♘f6 23 h3 ♗d7 24 ♕a3 ♕a8

By playing this, Black essentially agrees that his position is worse and hopes to survive in an inferior endgame. Attempts to attack on the kingside would hardly work. For example, 24...♕c8 25 c5 g4 26 c6!? is in White's favour.

25 ♕a5!? ♕xa5

Perhaps 25...c5!? is better.

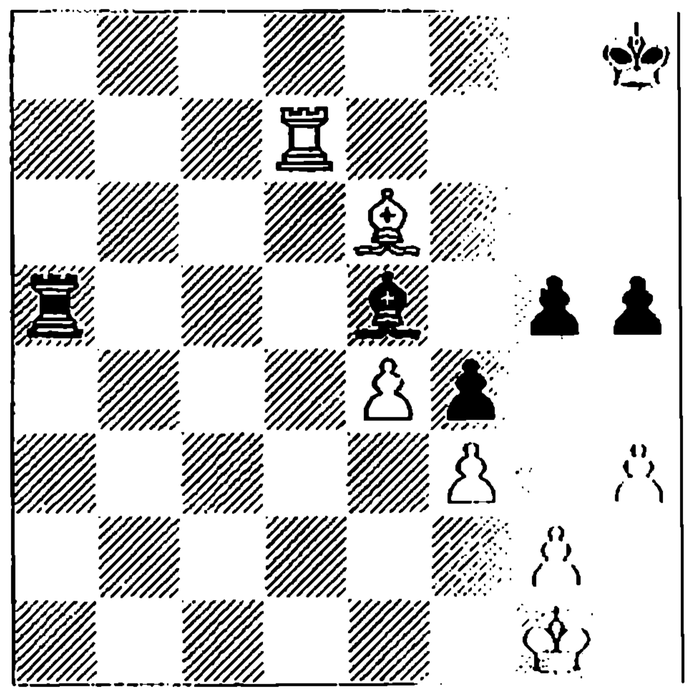
26 ♗xa5 ♖c8 27 ♖d1?!

White misses the possibility of 27 c5!, with a clear advantage in all lines. For example, 27...dxc5 (if 27...c6, then 28 dxc6 ♘xc6 29 cxd6 ♖xd6 30 ♗c7, winning the e5-pawn) 28 ♘d3 ♗b5 29 ♘xf4! c6 30 dxc6 (30 ♗xb5 cxb5 31 ♘e6 ♘d7 is less clear) 30...♗xc2 31 ♘xc5 ♖xc6 32 ♘g3!? and Black is suffering.

27...c5! 28 dxc6 ♖xc6 29 ♘d3! ♘xe4

It was not easy for Black to find a good defence. For example, 29...♖a6 30 ♗c7 ♘e8 31 ♗d8 ♗f6? 32 ♘b4 or 29...♗e6? 30 ♘b1. However, 29...♗f8!? with the idea 30 ♗d8 (30 c6 ♗e6) 30...♔f7 31 ♘xe5+ dxe5 32 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 33 ♖xd7 ♗c5+ is stronger than the text move.

30 ♘xe5! ♖c5 31 ♘xd7 ♘xa5 32 ♔d1! ♔h8 33 ♖xd6 ♘xd7 34 ♖xd7 ♗e5 35 ♔c6 *(D)*



B

Now Black's survival is under real question again. It is hard to provide an ultimate judgement on the endgame, but in practical play White's winning chances should not be underestimated.

35...♖c5 36 ♗f5!? ♖c1+

36...♔g8 is probably better. Instead, Black decided to win the g2-pawn, underestimating the activation of White's king.

37 ♔f2 ♖c2+ 38 ♔f1 ♖c1+ 39 ♔e2 ♖c2+ 40 ♔d3 ♖xg2 41 ♔c4

41 ♖e7!?, hoping to push his e-pawn quickly, is a serious alternative. It seems that in this case Black can resist only by 41...♗f6!, which is justified tactically by 42 ♖e8+ ♔g7 43 e5 ♔f7!.

41...♗b2! 42 ♖h7+!? ♔g8 43 ♖xh5

White has restored his material advantage, but his rook on h5 is a bit passive.

43...♗f6 44 ♖h6

44 ♔d5 is no stronger: 44...♔f7!?.

44...♔f7 45 ♖h7+ ♗g7 46 e5 ♖b2!

An important move. Instead, 46...♖a2? loses a piece after 47 e6+ ♔f6 48 e7! ♔xe7 49 ♖xg7+ ♔f6 50 ♗b1! (attacking the rook) 50...♖b2 51 ♖g6+.

47 e6+

After 47 ♔c5!?, the waiting 47...♖a2 is possible, because after 48 e6+ ♔f6 49 e7 Black saves himself by 49...♖a5+! =.

47...♔f6 48 ♗e4 ♖b8 49 ♔d5?

This mistake allows Black to regroup his pieces optimally. He could have played for a win by 49 h4! ♖c8+ (or 49...gxh4 50 ♗c6! ♖h8? 51 e7) 50 ♔d5 gxh4 51 ♔d6!.

49...♖d8+ 50 ♔c6 ♗f8!

Now White is unable to protect his e6-pawn in a convenient way.

51 ♖d7 ♗e7

The threat of 52...♖h8 saves Black.

52 ♖xd8 ½-½

Game 20

Kruppa – Golubev

Donetsk Z 1998

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 5 ♘f3 0-0 6 ♗e2 ♘a6!? *(D)*

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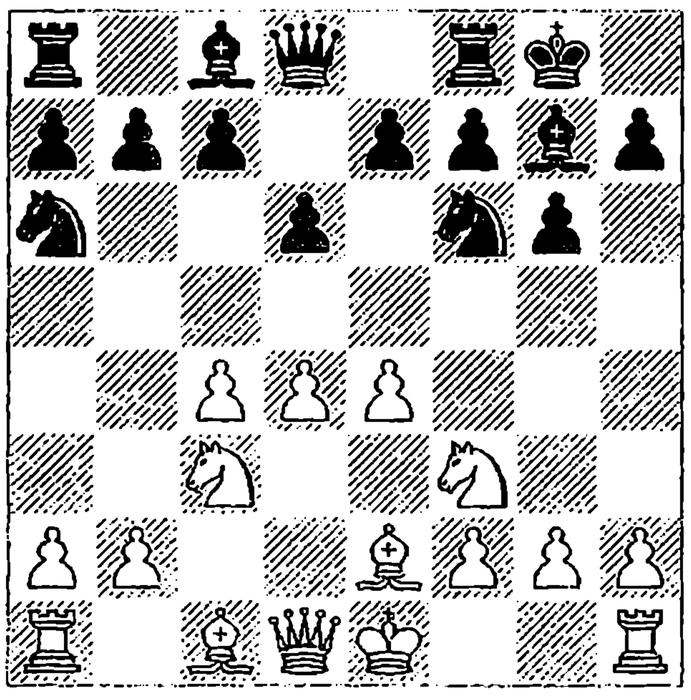


This move, in comparison with the customary 6...e5, allows Black to avoid the Exchange Variation (6...e5 7 dxe5) and also a number of other lines. After 7 0-0 Black can play 7...e5 (transposing to 6...e5 7 0-0 ♘a6), but Glek's favourite continuation 7...c6!? is also playable.

I have not employed 6...♘a6 often, and in this game I was aiming to avoid my opponent's preparation: for some reason I expected that Kruppa would begin the game with 1 e4 and, when facing 1 d4, I decided to vary slightly from my standard repertoire.

7 ♘d2!?

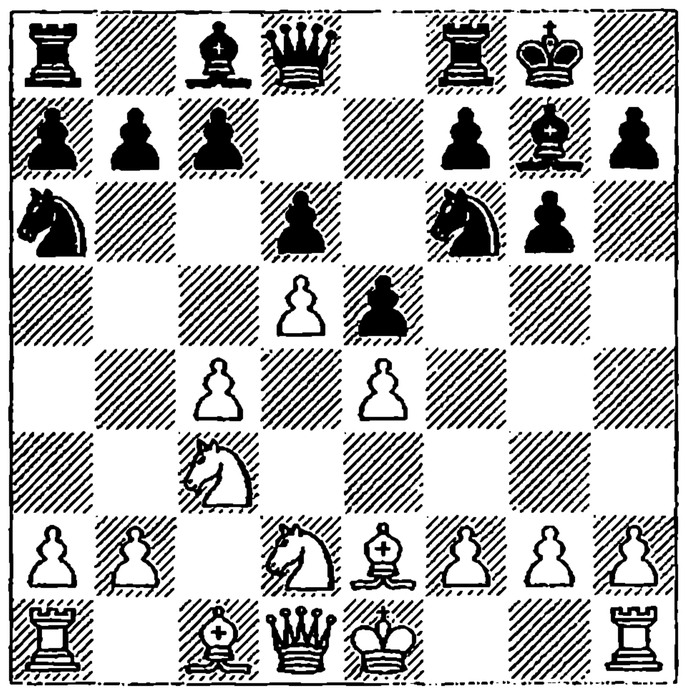
Kramnik's patent.

7...e5

Perhaps Black ought to prefer 7...c5 8 d5 e6 9 0-0 exd5 10 cxd5, transposing to a Modern Benoni, as in Kramnik-Ivanchuk, Belgrade 1995. Curiously, in Leko-Kramnik, Brissago Wch (13) 2004 the players reached the same position via the normal Benoni move-order. Both games continued 10...♘e8 11 ♘c4 ♘ac7 12 a4 f5, but I do not intend to enter into a detailed study of this line.

8 d5 *(D)*

B



Now we have a position that usually arises via 6...e5 7 d5 ♘a6 8 ♘d2!, which explains why this game features in this chapter on the Petrosian System. White's idea, naturally, is to meet 8...♘c5?! with 9 b4.

8...♗h6

Black has tried various other options, including the interesting 8...h5!?, but in most games played at a serious level White obtained some advantage.

9 ♘b3! ♗xc1 10 ♕xc1

During the game I thought that White had a small but stable advantage here. Perhaps this

evaluation is correct. Black has got rid of the dark-squared bishops, which in positions with a closed centre (...e5/d5) can often be considered to be an achievement. However, here the white pieces are coordinating better, and sooner or later he will develop an initiative by playing f4 or c5.

10...♘e8

After 10...b6 (preparing 11...♘c5 12 ♘d2 a5) White could try 11 ♘d2!?. In Averbakh-Sakharov, USSR Ch (Kiev) 1964 Black opted for 10...c6, but 11 0-0 cxd5 12 cxd5 ♗d7 13 ♕e3 ♘e8 14 f4 led to a pleasant position for White.

11 0-0 ♘g7

It is hard to judge what is Black's best. Each of his options (11...g5!?; 11...f5 12 f4) has its own disadvantages.

12 ♕d2 ♕e7 13 ♖ae1 ♗d7 14 ♗d1 ♖ae8 15 a3

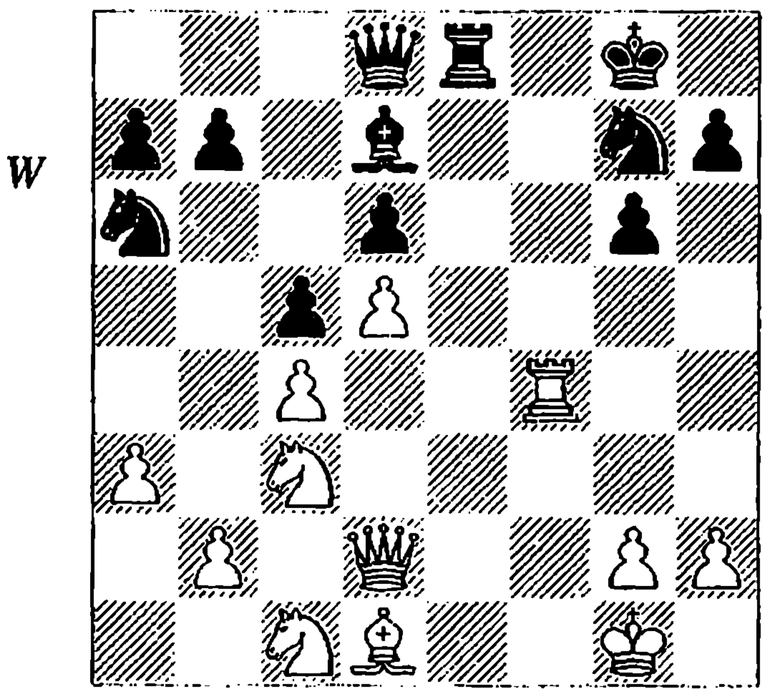
15 ♘b5!? ♗xb5 16 cxb5 ♘c5 is also slightly better for White.

15...c5 16 ♘c1!? f5 17 f4 fxe4 18 ♖xe4!?

A decent alternative is 18 ♘xe4 ♖xf4 19 ♖xf4 exf4 20 ♕xf4 (20 ♘d3!?) with the idea 20...♗f5 21 ♗a4!.

18...♕f6 19 ♖f2 exf4 20 ♖fxf4 ♕d8 21 ♖xe8 ♖xe8 *(D)*

Possibly 21...♕xe8!? is a more precise defence.



22 ♘1e2

White's first inaccuracy, albeit a relatively minor one. The typical 22 g4!, totally restricting the black knight, deserved very serious attention.

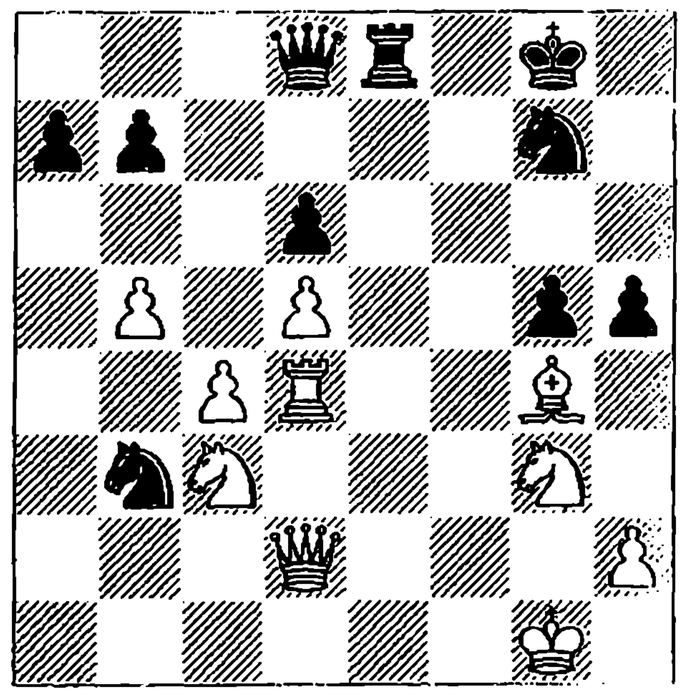
22...♘c7 23 b4?!

Now 23 g4 is well met by 23...g5, but 23 ♘g3 ♖e5!?, with a defensible position for Black, is a more natural continuation.

23...cxb4! 24 axb4 ♘a6!

The return of the knight to a6 was almost certainly missed by White. Black gets real counterchances and the position becomes double-edged.

25 b5 ♘c5 26 g4!? g5 27 ♖d4 h5 28 ♘g3 ♗xg4! 29 ♗xg4 ♘b3 *(D)*



30 ♕d1?!

30 ♕d3! ♘xd4 31 ♗xh5! is stronger. The complications after 31...♖e1+ 32 ♔f2 ♖c1 33 ♕xd4 ♕f8+ or 31...♕b6 32 ♗xe8 ♘f3+ 33 ♔f1 ♕g1+ 34 ♔e2 g4 should result in approximate equality.

30...♘xd4 31 ♕xd4?!

31 ♗xh5! ♕b6! (31...♘xh5 32 ♕xh5 is approximately equal) 32 ♗xe8 ♘xb5+ 33 ♔g2 ♘xc3 also favours Black, but White keeps significant chances for a draw after, e.g., 34 ♔f1 ♔xf7 35 ♕f3+.

31...hxg4 32 ♘ce4 ♖f8 33 ♕xa7 ♕e7

Now White simply does not have sufficient compensation for the exchange. Black's position is technically winning.

34 ♕d4 ♘f5 35 ♕d2 ♘xg3 36 ♘xg3 ♕e5 37 ♔g2 ♕f6 38 ♕c2 ♖a8 39 ♘f5 ♖f8(?)

39...♕a1! wins on the spot.

40 ♘g3 ♕f3+ 41 ♔g1 ♕e3+ 42 ♔g2 ♖f6 43 ♕e2?!

43 ♕e4 ♕f3+ 44 ♔g1 is a better chance.

43...♕f3+ 44 ♔g1 ♕xe2 45 ♘xe2 ♖f4!

The pawn endgame is winning for Black.

46 ♘xf4 gxf4 47 h4!? gxh3! 48 ♔h2 ♔f7 49 ♔xh3 ♔f6 50 ♔g4 ♔e5 51 b6 ♔d4 0-1

5 Classical: Exchange Variation

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 5 ♘f3 0-0 6 ♗e2 e5 7 dxe5

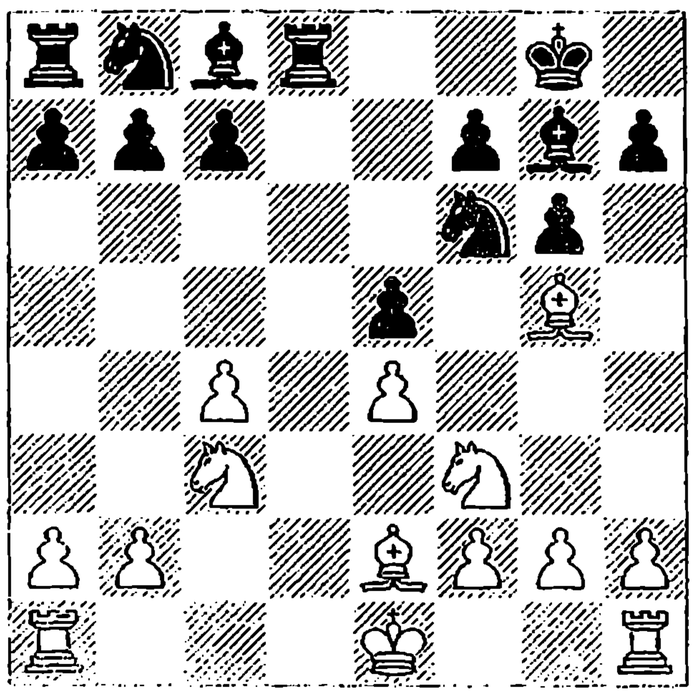
The exchange on e5 cannot be considered theoretically dangerous for Black. However, it allows White to get positions with almost no risk of losing, which is not always pleasant for King's Indian players who are usually hoping to play for a win. Therefore, the Exchange Variation is, first of all, a psychological weapon, and rather a strong one at that. Players who are especially afraid to enter the sterile positions that arise after 6...e5 7 dxe5 can be advised to try 6...♘a6, which was discussed in the context of Game 20 (Kruppa-Golubev). Another major sideline is 6...♗g4, but I have never played this move seriously and shall not be considering it in this book. Still, 6...e5 is clearly the main move and in most cases Black should not be advised to try something else.

7...dxe5 8 ♕xd8 ♖xd8 9 ♗g5 *(D)*

The main move, first used by Flohr in 1950. White is threatening now to win the e5-pawn (10 ♘xe5), but his main threat is certainly 10 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 11 ♘d5 or 10 ♘d5.

The immediate 9 ♘d5 is met by 9...♘xd5 (a much sharper, but less reliable, line is 9...♖d7 10 ♘xe5 ♘xd5 11 ♘xd7 ♘b4 12 ♘xb8 ♘c2+ 13 ♔d1 ♘xa1 14 ♗f4 ♗xb2 15 ♗xc7 a5) 10 cxd5 c6! 11 ♗c4 b5 12 ♗b3 (or 12 ♗g5 f6 13 ♗b3 cxd5 with good counterplay) 12...♗b7 13 ♗g5 ♖c8! and Black is a tempo ahead in comparison with the normal lines.

B



9...♖e8

The main, and most natural answer. Two other options, 9...c6 and 9...♘bd7 will be considered in games to follow and here I shall mention only one more alternative – the slightly unnatural 9...♖f8!? *(D)*, introduced by one of the most creative King's Indian researchers, Zigurds Lanka, many of whose novelties were also popularized by his pupils, Bologan and Shirov. Now:

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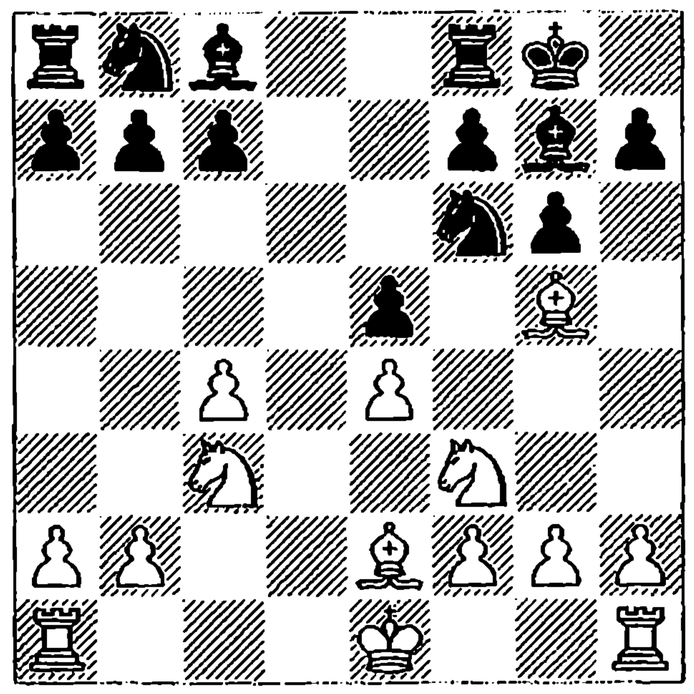

a) After 10 ♘xe5!? ♘xe4 11 ♘xe4 ♗xe5 12 0-0-0 Black should play 12...♘c6! (rather than 12...♘d7?! 13 ♖he1 ♖e8!? 14 ♗f3 ♔g7 15 c5! ♖b8 16 ♗e3 f5 17 c6!? bxc6 18 ♘c3 ♖e6 19 ♗xa7 ♖b4, when he was slightly worse in Y.Korsunsky-Golubev, Novi Sad jr open 1990) 13 ♘f6+ ♔g7 14 ♘g4 ♗xg4 15 ♗xg4 with an equal position.

b) 10 ♘d5 ♘xd5 11 cxd5 c6 12 ♗c4 b5! 13 ♗b3 ♗b7 14 ♖c1 a5! 15 a3 (the justification of 9...♖f8 is that now after 15 a4?! bxa4 16 ♗xa4 Black's c6-pawn is not pinned and he can simply play 16...cxd5 17 ♗e7 dxc4!) 15...a4 16 ♗a2 ♖c8 with complicated play. Now 17 ♗e3 (or: 17 ♗e7 ♗h6 18 ♖d1 ♖e8!, Cherniak-Bologan, Moscow open 1995; 17 0-0 c5!) can be answered by 17...b4!? 18 axb4 a3 (or 18...♘a6).

c) 10 0-0!? c6 11 h3 ♘a6!? 12 ♗e3 ♖e8 13 ♖fd1 is a surprising transposition to a position from the 7 ♗e3 ♘a6 8 0-0 c6 9 dxe5 line (see Game 16), which is a bit better for White:

13...♗f8 14 ♗g5!? (14 ♘d2, Karpov-Kasparov, New York/Lyons Wch (5) 1990; 14 ♗d3!?) 14...♔g7 15 ♗d3!? h6 16 ♗e3 ♗c5 17 ♗xc5 ♘xc5 18 b4 ♘cd7?! (better is 18...♘xd3 19 ♖xd3 b5!? with the idea 20 c5? a5!) 19 c5 b6 20 cxb6 axb6 21 a4 c5 and here in Annageldyev-Golubev, Pavlikeni open 1990, Annageldyev missed a possibility to obtain a very promising initiative by 22 b5! followed by ♘d2-c4.

10 ♘d5

The only more or less serious attempt. After 10 ♗xf6? ♗xf6 11 ♘d5 ♗d8 (Romanchuk-Golubev, Odessa open 1983), followed by ...c6, it is only Black who can be better. An interesting game Kochiev-Dvoretsky, Moscow 1976 continued 10 ♖d1 h6!? 11 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 12 ♘d5 ♗d8 13 ♘xe5 ♖xe5 14 ♘b6 axb6 15 ♖xd8+ ♔g7 16 ♖xc8 ♖xa2 17 ♖xb8 ♖xe4 18 ♖d8 ♖xb2 19 ♖d2 ♖b1+ 20 ♖d1 ♖b2 with a draw by repetition of moves. Sometimes White plays 10 0-0-0. Black has a good answer in 10...♘a6!, after which 11 ♘xe5 (11 ♘e1 is better, with approximately equal play) is not dangerous at all, because Black counterattacks by 11...♘c5! (instead, 11...♖xe5 12 ♖d8+ ♘e8 13 f4 ♖e6 14 ♗g4 ♖b8 is very unclear).

10...♘xd5 11 cxd5 c6 12 ♗c4 cxd5

A more controversial line is 12...b5 13 ♗b3 ♗b7 14 ♖c1 ♖c8 (14...a5 15 a4!).

13 ♗xd5 *(D)*

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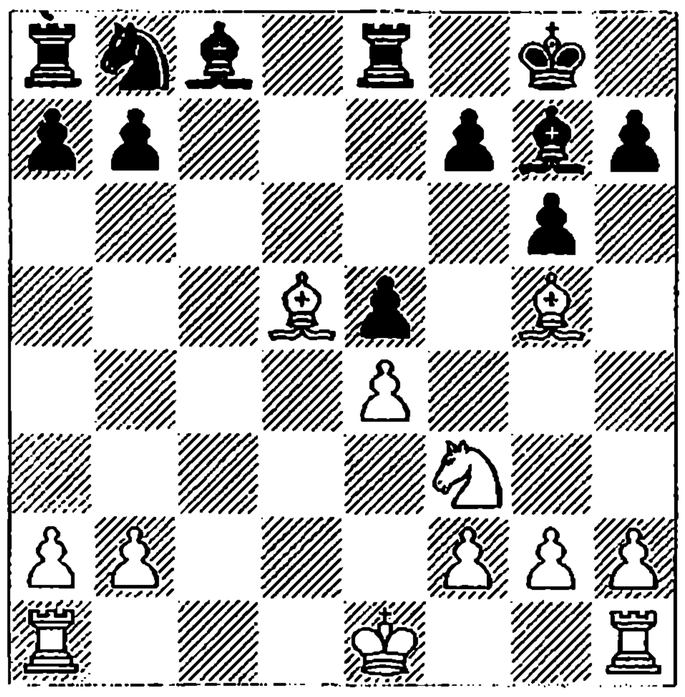


This is the main line of the Exchange Variation. Black now faces a key decision: where to develop his knight.

13...♘d7!

This move, introduced by Fischer in 1962, is probably simplest. 13...♘c6 is relatively less reliable, but 13...♘a6!? is another move which can be suggested for Black.

14 ♘d2 ♘c5! 15 ♘c4 ♗f8!?

Black will continue 16...♗e6 with almost complete equality. Players who use more classical openings with Black could be happy with such a position, but King's Indian players, predictably, often try riskier and more combative paths than 9...♖e8.

Game 21

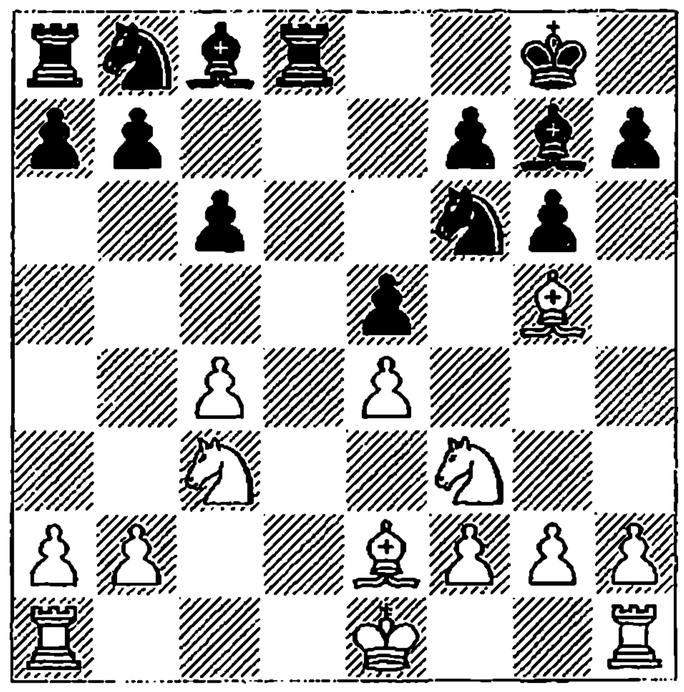
Onishchuk – Golubev

USSR Army Cht (Leningrad) 1989

1 c4 g6 2 ♘c3 ♗g7 3 d4 d6 4 e4 ♘f6 5 ♗e2 0-0 6 ♘f3 e5 7 dxe5 dxe5 8 ♕xd8 ♖xd8 9 ♗g5 c6!? *(D)*

This move was probably first used by Ratmir Kholmov in 1954, but it only attracted real attention at the end of the 1980s.

W



10 ♘xe5!

The critical reply. A good reaction to 10 0-0 is 10...h6!? (rather than 10...♘a6 11 ♘xe5 ♖e8 12 f4 ♘c5 13 ♗f3 ♘h5 14 ♗xh5 gxh5 15 ♗h4 f6 16 ♗f2! fxe5 17 ♗xc5 exf4 18 ♖xf4 ♗e6 19 ♗d6 ♗xc4 20 e5).

10...♖e8!

10...♘a6? fails to 11 ♘xf7!? ♔xf7 12 e5, when Black cannot get sufficient compensation.

11 0-0-0!

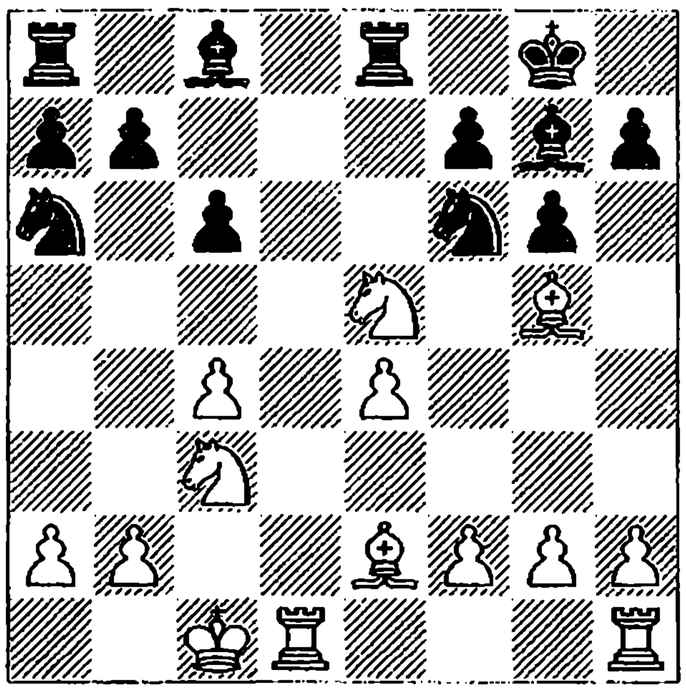
After 11 f4, 11...♘h5!? 12 ♗xh5 gxh5 13 ♗h4 ♘d7!, as in Maliutin-Glek, Moscow 1989, seems to be an easy route to equality.

11...♘a6! *(D)*

Not 11...♖xe5?, when White regains the piece by 12 ♖d8+ ♖e8 13 ♗xf6! ♖xd8 14 ♗xd8; 11...♘xe4?! is also unreliable and inadvisable, even though after 12 ♘xe4 ♗xe5 Black is lucky

enough to avoid a forced loss in the line 13 f4!? ♗g7 14 ♗f3 ♘a6 15 ♘d6 ♖e6 16 f5 ♖e5.

W



12 ♖d6!?

This is the most popular test of Black's idea. There are two other serious continuations:

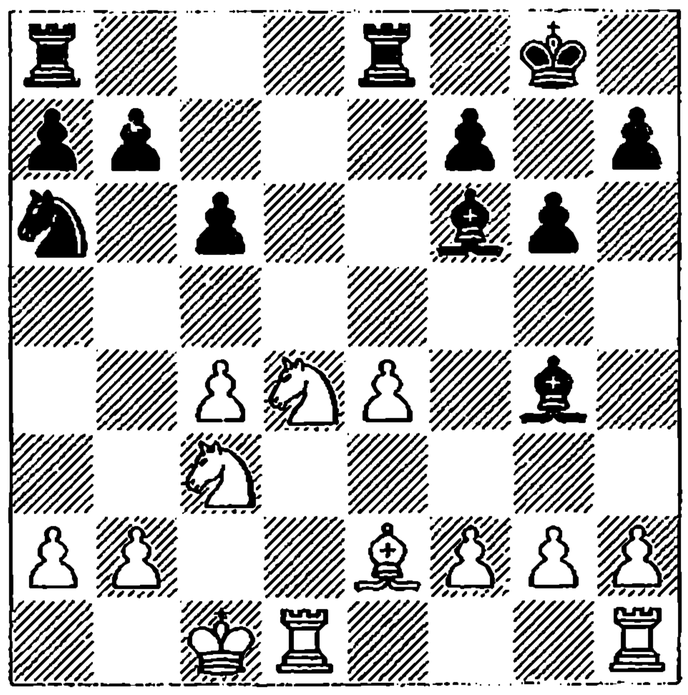
a) 12 f4 h6 13 ♗h4 g5 and now White has a choice:

a1) 14 fxg5 hxg5 15 ♗g3 ♘c5! 16 ♖hf1 ♗e6! with sufficient counterplay, Levit-Kholmov, Leningrad 1954 (but not 16...♘cxe4?! 17 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 18 ♗h5! ♘xg3 19 ♗xf7+ ♔h7 20 ♗g6+ ♔h6 21 hxg3 ♖xe5 22 ♗c2!, Burlant-Paetzold, corr. 1997).

a2) 14 ♗g3 ♘c5 15 ♗f3 g4 16 ♗f2 gxf3!? 17 ♗xc5 fxg2 18 ♖hg1 ♘h5 (less reliable is 18...♗h3 19 ♖d3 ♘h5) 19 ♗e3 (or 19 ♘d3 ♗xc3!? 20 bxc3 ♖xe4 21 ♖xg2+ ♔h7, Ivkov-K.Werner, Wijk aan Zee 2000) 19...♗h3! 20 ♖d3 ♖ad8 21 ♖xd8 ♖xd8 22 ♘d1 ♗xe5 (if 22...f6?!, then 23 ♘g6!) 23 fxe5 ♔h7 24 ♘f2 ♗e6 25 ♖xg2 (25 b3 ♖g8) 25...♗xc4 26 ♘g4 ♖g8 and despite White's slight initiative, a draw looks like the only logical result – Black's plan involves ...♖g6 with the idea ...f6.

b) 12 ♘f3!? is a simple but poisonous retreat. For example, 12...♗g4 (two other known lines are 12...♘c5 13 ♘d2 ♘g4 14 ♗xg4 ♗xg4 15 f3 ♗e6 16 ♔c2 with the idea 16...b5 17 ♗e3 ♘a6 18 cxb5 cxb5 19 ♔b1, and 12...h6 13 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 14 ♘d4!? ♘c5 15 f3 – in both cases it is not clear whether Black's 'two bishops advantage' fully compensates for the pawn; one more idea is 12...♘g4 13 ♗h4 ♘c5 14 ♘d2!? ♗xc3 15 bxc3 ♘xe4 16 ♘xe4 ♖xe4 17 ♖d8+ ♔g7, when Black regains the pawn, but his position does not inspire) and here the strongest seems to be 13 ♗xf6! (13 h3 is easily neutralized by 13...♘xe4!; more interesting is 13 e5 ♘d7 14 h3 ♗xf3 15 ♗xf3 ♘xe5 16 ♗e2 but I guess that White's two bishops hardly ensure him an advantage, and the games played so far tend to confirm this viewpoint) 13...♗xf6 14 ♘d4! *(D)*.

B



Possibly I have not tried hard enough, but I have been unable to find secure equality for Black in this position. His options are:

b1) 14...♗xd4 initiates a forced sequence that leads to an inferior endgame for Black: 15 ♖xd4 ♗xe2 16 ♘xe2 c5 17 ♖d7 ♖xe4 18 ♘c3 ♖xc4 19 ♖xb7 ♘b4 20 ♔b1! (imprecise is 20 a3 ♘a2+ 21 ♔c2 ♘xc3 22 bxc3 ♖e8!). Now 20...♖d8 21 a3! ♘d5 22 ♘xd5 ♖xd5 23 ♖c1! ♖h4 (or 23...♖e4 24 ♖c2!) 24 h3 ♖g5 25 g3 ♖xh3 26 ♖xa7 ♖h2 27 ♖c2 leaves Black in trouble, as White's a-pawn is simply too dangerous.

b2) 14...♖ad8 15 ♗xg4 ♗xd4 16 f3 ♘b4 is answered by 17 ♔b1! (17 a3?! ♗xc3 18 bxc3 ♘d3+ 19 ♔c2 {Quist-Vanheste, Dieren open 1989} 19...♘e5! 20 ♔b3 ♖xd1 21 ♖xd1 ♘xg4 22 fxg4 ♖xe4 23 ♖d7 ♖e1!? 24 g5 ♔f8 followed by 25...♖e7), when White has every chance to consolidate and torment his opponent in an endgame with an extra pawn. Importantly, 17...♗xc3 (or, similarly, 17...♗e5 18 ♖xd8! ♖xd8 19 a3) is answered by 18 ♖xd8! ♖xd8 19 bxc3 and 19...♘d3?? fails to 20 ♖d1. Relatively best for Black is 17...♔f8, but defending such positions is not everyone's cup of tea.

We now return to 12 ♖d6!? *(D)*:

12...♘h5!?

An improvisation over the board. Although I twice repeated this curious knight jump, and scored with it 2½ out of 3 overall, it is most likely not Black's strongest move. Therefore, it would have been wiser to analyse it properly

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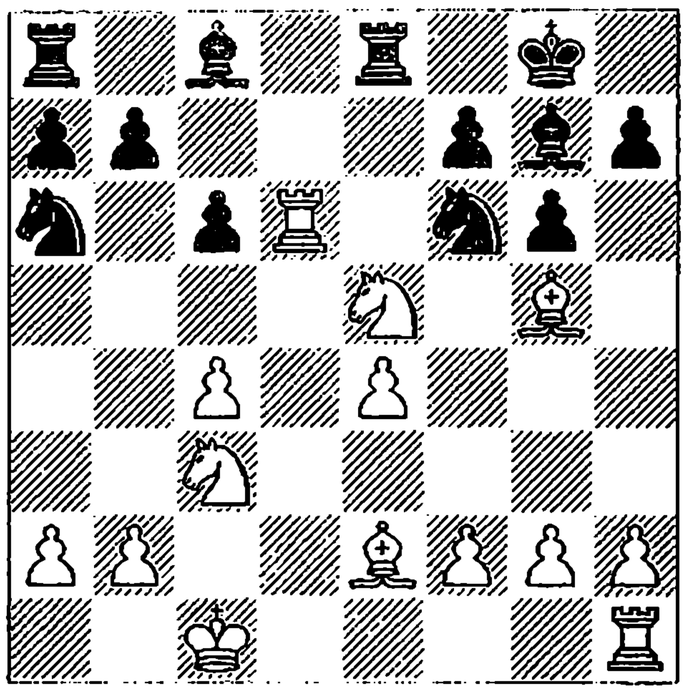

after the first game. Still, when one wins, and wins quickly, it can be hard to remain objective.

a) 12...♖xe5?! 13 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 14 ♖xf6 ♘c5 15 ♖d6! ♘xe4 16 ♘xe4 ♖xe4 17 ♖d8+ ♔g7 18 ♗f3! ♖xc4+ 19 ♔d2, Tal-Smirin, USSR Cht (Podolsk) 1990.

b) 12...♘xe4 13 ♘xe4 ♗xe5 14 ♘f6+ ♗xf6 15 ♗xf6 ♘c5 16 ♗f3 ♗f5 17 ♖hd1 leaves Black with problems.

c) 12...♗f8 13 ♖xf6 ♖xe5 14 ♗e3!?.

d) The main line is 12...♗e6! 13 f4 (if 13 ♘f3, then 13...♘c5!? 14 ♘d2 ♘fd7!), and now:

d1) 13...♘c5?! 14 ♗f3 leads to problems for Black after 14...h6 15 ♗h4 g5 16 ♗f2!, attacking the knight, or 14...♘h5 15 ♗xh5! gxh5 16 ♘d3! ♘xd3+ 17 ♖xd3 ♗xc4 18 ♖g3! ♔f8 19 e5!.

d2) 13...h6! was first played in a 1986 correspondence game, and then repeated by Kasparov. Now:

d21) 14 ♗h4 g5! 15 fxg5 (15 ♗g3 ♘c5) 15...hxg5 16 ♗xg5 ♘c5 17 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 18 ♘d3 ♗e7 (another suggestion by Kasparov, 18...♗xc3 19 ♘xc5 ♗b4 20 ♘xb7 ♖eb8! 21 a3 ♗xd6 22 ♘xd6 ♖b3, is dubious: after 23 ♗d1!? ♖d3 24 c5 White is better) 19 ♖d4 (19 e5 ♗xd6 20 exd6 is double-edged) 19...♗f6 and if White avoids the repetition (i.e. 20 ♖d6) by 20 e5, then after 20...♘xd3+ 21 ♖xd3 ♗xe5 Black has full compensation – Kasparov.

d22) 14 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 15 ♖hd1 (15 ♘f3!? ♗xc3 16 bxc3 ♘c5! and now 17 ♖d4? fails to 17...♗g4! 18 h3 ♘xe4 19 hxg4 ♘g3! while after 17 ♘d2, 17...♗f5 18 e5 ♖ad8 gives Black compensation – Kasparov) 15...♗xe5 16 fxe5 ♖ac8 (not 16...♔f8? 17 c5! ♘xc5 18 b4, but if the draw suits Black he can opt for 16...♖e7 17 ♖d8+ ♖e8!) 17 ♔d2 ♖e7 18 ♔e3 ♖cc8 19 ♖d8 ♔f8! and White has only a small and irrelevant advantage, Korchnoi-Kasparov, Tilburg 1991

We now return to 12...♘h5!? *(D)*:

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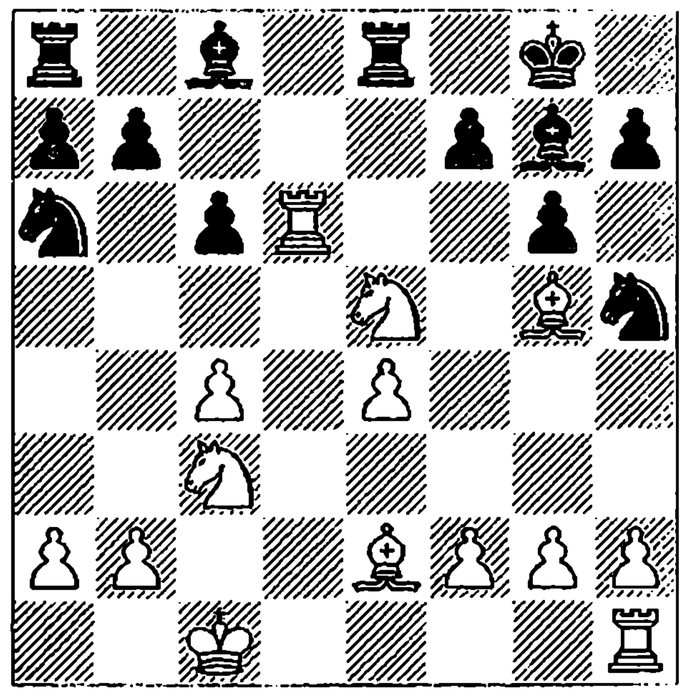


13 ♘g4!?

A tempting answer. However, White can hope for a minimal advantage after the more standard retreats as well:

a) 13 ♘f3 ♘c5 (13...♗xc3 14 bxc3 ♖xe4 15 ♖d8+ ♔g7 16 ♗d3 ♖e6 17 ♗e3 c5 18 ♖e1 is better for White, Dueball-Degenhardt, Bundesliga 1991/2) 14 ♗e3 (not 14 ♘d2? ♗e5 15 ♖d8 ♖xd8 16 ♗xd8 ♘f4; 14 e5 ♘e6 intending 15...♘ef4 gives Black compensation) 14...♗xc3 15 ♗xc5 ♗a5 (White is also slightly better after 15...♗g7 16 ♗e3 ♗f8 17 ♖dd1 or 15...♗f6!?, when the exchange sacrifice 16 ♘d2!? ♗e7 17 ♗xh5 can be considered, but simpler is 16 ♗c3 ♖xe4 17 ♖hd1!?, Belozerov-Nadyrkhanov, St Petersburg open 1994) 16 e5 (16 ♗e3 ♖xe4!? 17 ♘g5 ♖e5 18 ♗xh5 gxh5 seems to suit Black) 16...f6 (16...♘f4 is answered by 17 ♗f1 with the idea 17...♗c7 18 ♖d2 ♗g4 19 ♗e3!) 17 ♗e3 ♗c7 18 ♖d2 fxe5 and, having an isolated pawn on e5, Black has not equalized fully yet.

b) 13 ♘d3 ♗f8 (the alternative 13...h6 14 ♗e3 ♗f8 15 ♖d4 c5 16 ♖d5 ♘f6 17 ♖e5 ♗e6 18 ♘f4 ♘d7 19 ♖xe6 fxe6 20 ♘xg6 is good for White, H.Olafsson-Zlochevsky, Philadelphia 1991; 13...♗xc3 14 bxc3 ♖xe4 15 ♖d8+ ♔g7 16 ♗xh5 gxh5 17 ♗e3 ♘c7 18 ♖e1 ♗f5 19 ♖xa8 ♘xa8 {Camarena Gimenez-Gi.Hernandez, Mislata open 2003} 20 ♘c5!? also favours White) 14 ♖d8 (14 ♖d4 ♘g7 and now 15 ♘f4 ♗c5! or 15 ♖d8 ♖xd8 16 ♗xd8 ♗e6 = Har-Zvi – Kožul, Zagreb Z 1993) 14...♖xd8 15 ♗xd8 ♗e6 (15...♗h6+?! 16 ♔c2! ♗e6 17 ♗h4! ♗xc4 18 ♗xh5 gxh5 19 f3!? does not look

reliable for Black, Gustafsson-Matthaei, German jr Ch (Hamburg) 1993) 16 ♗g5 ♗xc4 17 ♖d1 and White maintains a nominal advantage. Black can choose between 17...♘g7 and 17...♘c5.

13...♘c5

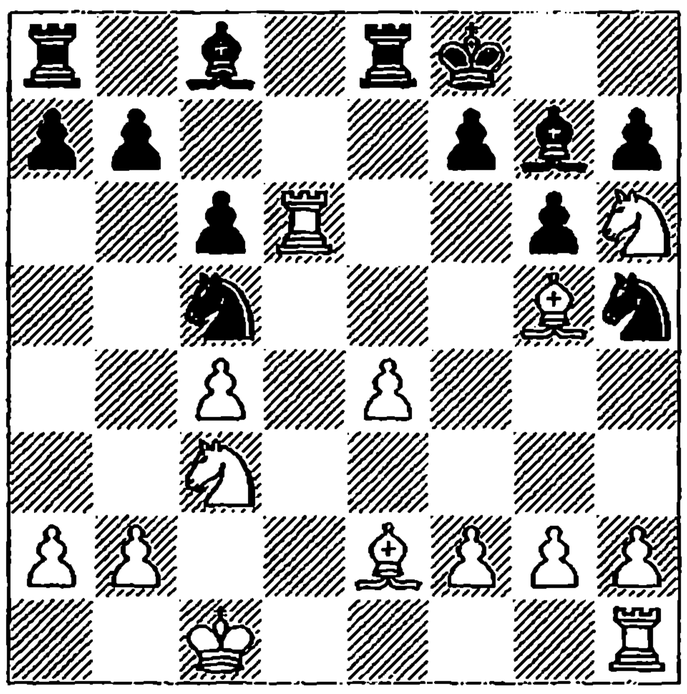
13...♗xc3 14 bxc3 ♘c5 leads to problems for Black after 15 ♘h6+ ♔g7 16 f3! (more precise than 16 ♗f3 f6 17 ♗e3 ♘xe4 18 ♗xe4 ♖xe4 19 ♖d8 ♘f4 20 g3 ♔xh6! 21 ♗xf4+ ♔g7, Umanskaya-Lesiège, Cappelle la Grande 2000) 16...♘e6 17 ♗d2! ♘hf4 18 ♗f1 ♔xh6 19 g3.

13...♗xg4 is also insufficient for equality: 14 ♗xg4 ♗e5 15 ♖dd1 (or 15 ♖d2 ♘f6 16 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 17 ♔c2 ♗xc3 18 ♔xc3 ♖xe4 19 ♗f3 ♖e7 20 b4) 15...♗xc3 16 bxc3 ♖xe4 17 ♖d4!?.

14 ♘h6+!

After 14 ♗e3 ♗xc3 15 ♗xc5 ♗xg4 16 ♗xg4 ♖xe4! (16...♗e5!? allows the exchange sacrifice 17 ♗xh5 ♗xd6 18 ♗xd6 gxh5 19 e5) 17 ♗xh5 ♗e5! Black solves his problems.

14...♔f8 *(D)*



15 ♗xh5

Not 15 f3? ♘e6!. But White's strongest appears to be 15 ♗e3! ♘xe4 16 ♘xe4 ♖xe4 and now the untried 17 ♗xh5! gxh5 18 ♖d8+ ♔e7 19 ♖xc8! ♖xc8 (19...♖xc4+?! 20 ♔b1 ♖xc8 21 ♘f5+ ♔d7 22 ♘xg7 ♖g4 23 ♘xh5 ♖xg2 24 ♘g3!? is even more dubious) 20 ♘f5+ ♔f8 21 ♘d6 ♖ce8 22 ♘xe4 ♖xe4 23 b3 results in an endgame that is unpleasant for Black due to his weakened kingside pawn-structure. A draw is probably achievable, but this is the only thing Black can dream about.

15...♗xc3! 16 ♗f3!

16 bxc3? is refuted by 16...♘xe4.

16...♗e5?!

An over-optimistic idea. Objectively, Black should try to regain the e4-pawn by 16...♗b4! (16...♗a5!? can also be considered) 17 ♖dd1 (if 17 ♖f6 then 17...♗e6 or 17...♘d3+ 18 ♔c2 ♘e5) 17...♘xe4 18 ♗xe4 ♖xe4 19 ♖d8+ ♖e8 20 ♖xe8+ ♔xe8 and Black seems to be able to maintain the balance without problems: 21 ♘g8 (or 21 a3 ♗e7!? 22 ♗xe7 ♔xe7 23 ♘g8+ ♔f8 24 ♘f6 ♗e6) 21...♔f8 22 ♘f6 ♗e6, etc.

17 ♖d2

17 ♖dd1 ♗e6 (17...♗g7 18 ♖he1!) 18 ♘g4!? ♗xg4 19 ♗xg4 ♘xe4 leaves White with a very slight advantage, A.Kalinin-Golubev, Minsk open 1993.

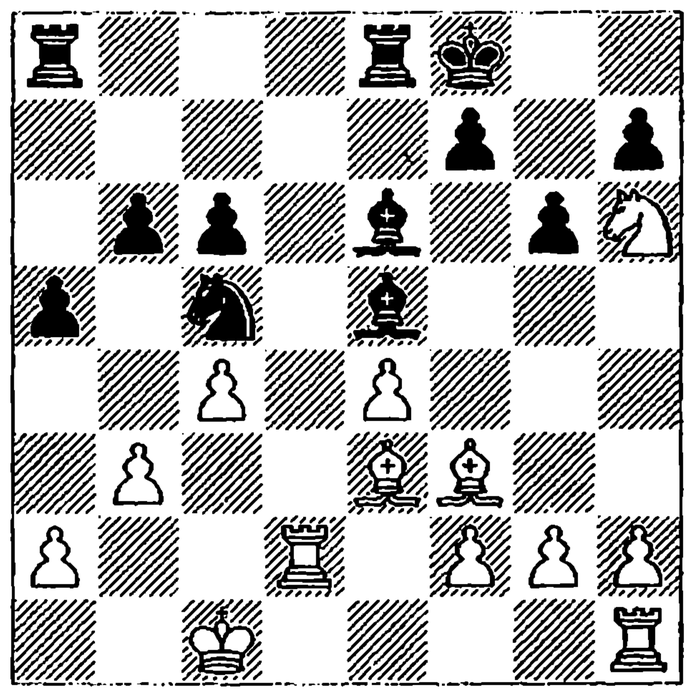
17...♗e6

17...♗g7, as in Maksimović-Pikula, Yugoslav Ch (Podgorica) 1996, is probably insufficient in view of 18 ♖hd1!? ♘e6 19 ♗e3 c5 20 ♖d5 b6 21 e5!.

18 b3

18 ♗e3 b6 19 ♘g4 (19 b4!?) 19...♗xg4! 20 ♗xg4 ♘xc4 was close to equality in Oll-Timoshchenko, Moscow (Alekhine mem) open 1992.

18...a5 19 ♗e3 b6 *(D)*



In this critical position, the then young Alexander Onishchuk blundered, failing to spot Black's threat.

20 h3?

Two years later, 20 ♔c2?! a4 21 ♖b1 (21 b4!? ♘a6 22 a3 ♗xc4 with counterplay) 21...axb3+ 22 axb3 ♖a2+ 23 ♔d1 ♖xd2+ 24 ♔xd2 (24 ♗xd2? ♖d8) 24...♖d8+ turned out to give Black excellent compensation in M.Marković-Golubev, Belgrade 1991.

But 20 ♔b1! seems to be the only move, and it places Black's compensation under serious suspicion. Then 20...a4 21 b4 ♘b3 (21...♘a6

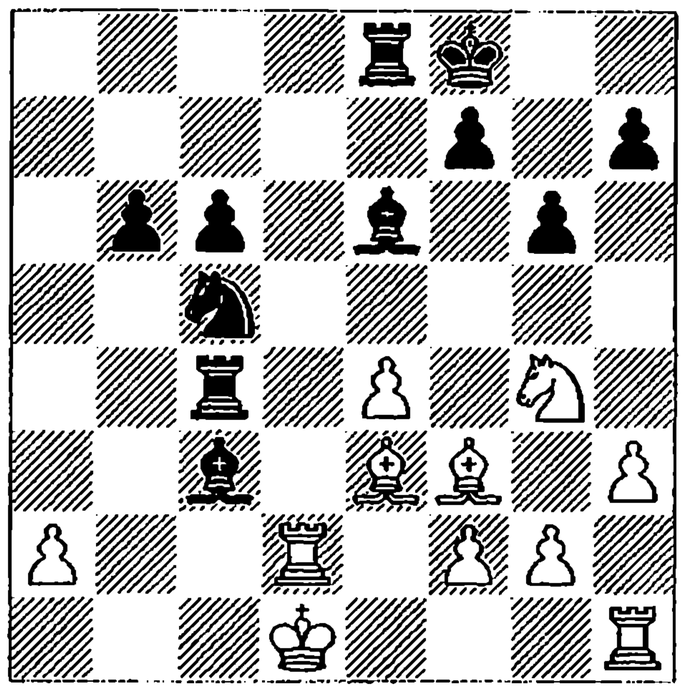
22 a3!?) 22 ♖dd1! ♗xc4 was my recommendation in my early annotations to the game, but now it seems to me so dubious for Black that I would not even consider it seriously.

It can be added that other ways do not pose problems for Black: 20 ♖hd1?! a4! 21 b4 ♘b3+ 22 axb3 axb3 23 ♗d4 (23 ♖b2 is answered by 23...♖a1+! 24 ♖b1 ♖ea8) 23...♗f4 24 ♗e3 (24 e5? ♗xh6 25 ♗xc6 ♖ed8) 24...♗e5 leads to a draw by repetition, and 20 ♘g4?! ♗xg4 21 ♗xg4 again allows 21...a4!.

20...a4! 21 bxa4

21 b4 ♘b3+ 22 axb3 axb3 23 ♗d4 ♗xd4 24 ♖xd4 ♖a1+ 25 ♔b2 ♖xh1 is also more or less hopeless for White.

21...♖xa4 22 ♘g4 ♖xc4+ 23 ♔d1 ♗c3 *(D)*



White's position is destroyed and he cannot expect to survive Black's activity.

24 ♖d6

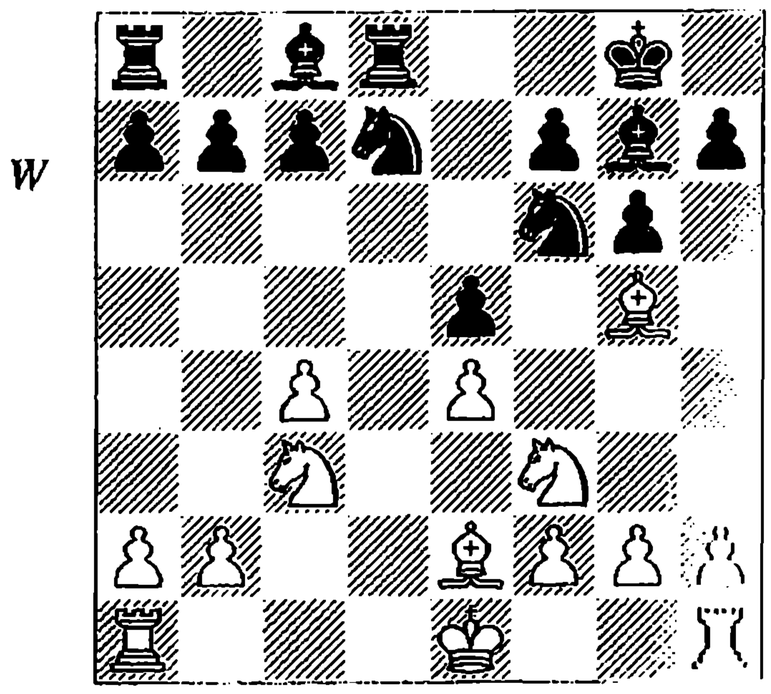
Or 24 ♖c2 ♖d8+ 25 ♔e2 f5! 26 ♗xc5+ (26 ♗h6+ ♗g7!) 26...♖xc5 27 ♘e3 f4 28 ♖hc1, when 28...♗d2!? 29 ♖xd2 ♖xd2+ 30 ♔xd2 fxe3+ 31 fxe3 ♖xc1 32 ♔xc1 ♗xa2 is a nice, but not the only, way to keep Black's big advantage.

24...h5 25 ♖xc6 hxg4 26 hxg4 ♖d8+ 27 ♔e2 ♘a4 28 e5 ♗xe5 0-1

Game 22
Schandorff – Golubev
Bundesliga 2002/3

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 5 ♘f3 0-0 6 ♗e2 e5 7 dxe5 dxe5 8 ♕xd8 ♖xd8 9 ♗g5 ♘bd7 *(D)*

This slightly passive move leads to positions which probably are a bit worse for Black. However, he at least avoids a liquidation in the centre and may realistically hope to play for a win. Another move by the knight, 9...♘a6?!, is unsuccessful in view of 10 ♘d5 ♖d6 11 ♘xf6+ ♗xf6 12 ♗xf6 ♖xf6 13 ♘xe5 ♖e6 14 f4 f6 15 ♘g4! (note that in the similar variation with 6 h3 instead of 6 ♗e2, Black would now take the e4-pawn with check – therefore, in the 5 ♘f3 6 h3 system, 9...♘a6 is a reasonable choice; however, here Black has problems because 15...♖xe4?? is refuted by 16 ♘xf6+) 15...h5 16 ♘f2 ♘c5 17 0-0 (or 17 ♗f3 ♘xe4 18 ♗xe4 19 ♔d2 fxe4 20 ♔e3!?) 17...♘xe4 18 ♘xe4 ♖xe4 19 ♗d3 with an advantage for White.



10 0-0-0

This natural move is White's predominant choice in practice.

a) 10 ♘d5 does not appear logical. After 10...c6 11 ♘e7+ ♔f8 12 ♘xc8 ♖dxc8 13 0-0-0?! ♘c5! 14 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 Black reached an ideal position with domination on the dark squares in Danailov-Kasparov, Dortmund jr Wch 1980. This instructive game continued 15 ♗d3 a5! 16 ♖he1 ♖e8 17 ♗f1 ♗d8 18 g3 a4 19 ♔c2 ♗a5! 20 ♖e3 ♖ad8 21 ♖xd8 ♖xd8 22 ♔b3 f6 23 ♖e2 ♔e7 24 ♗g2 ♘d3 25 a3 ♘c5 26 b4 h5 27 ♖e3 g5 28 hxg5 fxg5 29 ♖e2 ♘b3 30 ♔b1 ♔f6 and White, who is in absolute zugzwang, resigned. A painful defeat!

b) White's only real alternative is 10 ♖d1 (which, like 10 0-0-0, creates a threat to the e5 pawn) 10...♖f8 11 ♘d5! (11 0-0 c6 is approximately equal, while 11 ♘b5?! allows 11...♘xe4! 12 ♘xc7 ♘xg5 13 ♘xa8 ♘e6! with an excellent position for Black, Gorobinskiy-Golubev, Internet 1999). Now:

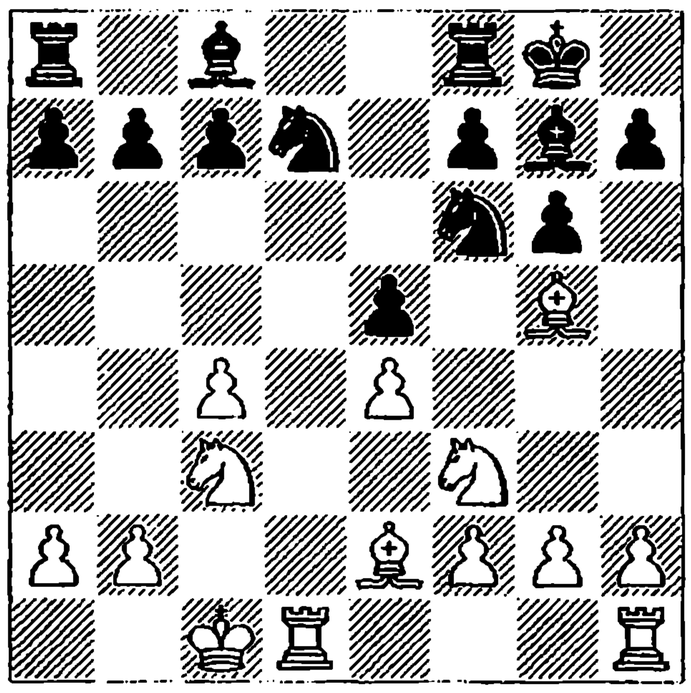
b1) 11...♘xe4 is a controversial attempt. White should answer with 12 ♗e3! (rather than

12 ♘e7+ ♔h8 13 ♘xc8 ♘dc5 14 ♘e7 ♘xg5 15 ♘xg5 ♗f6 = Siegel-Cvitan, Swiss Cht 1995) 12...♘b6 (12...♘dc5? 13 ♘xc7 ♖b8 14 b4) 13 ♘xc7 ♖b8 and in this almost untested position, 14 a4!? may be unpleasant for Black.

b2) 11...c6 12 ♘e7+ ♔h8, and 13 ♗e3 (innocuous is 13 ♘xc8 ♖axc8, Grünfeld-Geller, Szczawno Zdroj (Przepiorka mem) 1950) can be answered by 13...b6!? with acceptable play for Black.

10...♖f8 *(D)*

There is simply no other way for Black to preserve the material status quo: 10...♖e8? 11 ♘b5 c6 12 ♘c7; 10...c6? 11 ♘xe5; 10...h6? 11 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 12 ♘d5.


W

11 ♘d2!?

White overprotects the e4-pawn in accordance with Nimzowitsch's principle. Of course, there are other possible continuations.

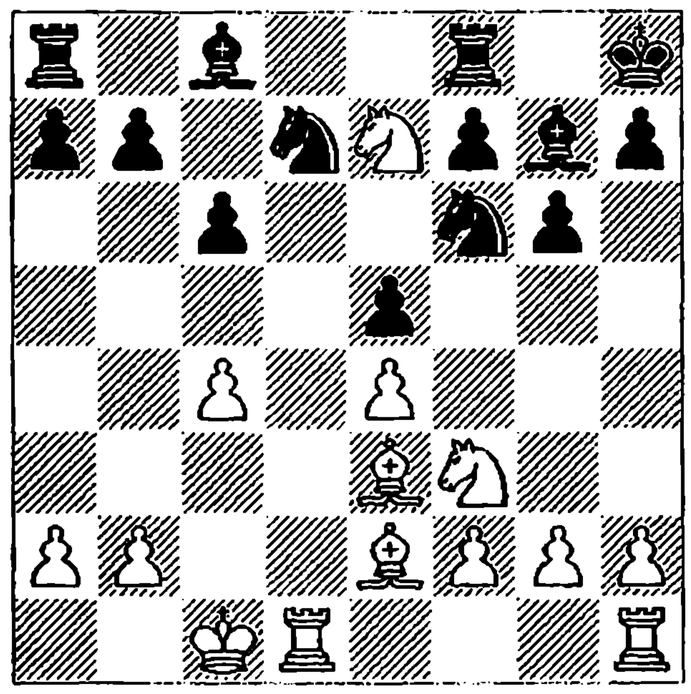
a) 11 ♘e1?! is unpromising in view of 11...♘c5! 12 f3 ♘e6 13 ♗e3 c5!, as shown in a number of games.

b) 11 b4 is more interesting: 11...a5!? 12 a3 axb4 13 axb4 h6!? (13...♘b6 allows White to develop some initiative by 14 ♗xf6! ♗xf6 15 c5; 13...♖a3?? was my choice in Tolstikh-Golubev, Minsk open 1993 – the idea of sacrificing the exchange on c3 looks attractive, but after 14 ♔b2! I suddenly realized that 14...♖xc3 is refuted by the calm 15 ♘d2!! with a virtually winning position for White; after some reflection, I returned the rook to a8 by 14...♖a8 and, not absolutely deservedly, managed to save half a point after long suffering in a very unpleasant situation) 14 ♗h4 (after 14 ♗e3 Black has 14...♘g4!; more reasonable is 14 ♗d2!?, when Black can try 14...♘b6!? 15 c5 ♘a4) and here 14...♖a3!? does work: 15 ♔b2 ♖xc3 16 ♔xc3 (16 ♘d2?! g5!) 16...♘xe4+ with double-edged play after, e.g., 17 ♔c2 g5 18 ♗g3 f5 19 ♘e1 with the idea 19...f4 20 f3 fxg3 21 fxe4 ♘f6 22 ♔d3!.

c) White's most popular continuation is the direct 11 ♘d5, when Black must make an important choice:

c1) 11...♘xe4 is a risky decision here, as it is in the 10 ♖d1 line. White's strongest is 12 ♗e3! (rather than 12 ♘e7+ ♔h8 13 ♘xc8 ♘dc5! 14 ♘e7 ♘xg5 15 ♘xg5 ♗f6 {Jakob-Lurje, Swiss Cht 1993} or 12 ♘xc7 ♘xg5!? 13 ♘xa8 ♘e6) and here the 'principled' 12...♘dc5?! (12...f5?! is also insufficient due to 13 ♘e7+!? ♔f7 14 ♘xc8 ♖d8 15 ♘xa7 f4 16 ♗d3 fxe3 17 ♗xe4 ♖xa7 18 fxe3; Black's best chance is 12...♘b6 13 ♘xc7 ♖b8, when White's position seems to be more promising, but at least 14 a4?! can be met by 14...♗f5!? with counterplay along the c-file) is refuted by 13 ♘d2! (instead of the unclear 13 ♘xc7 ♖b8 14 b4 ♘a4, which was twice played as Black by GM Popović).

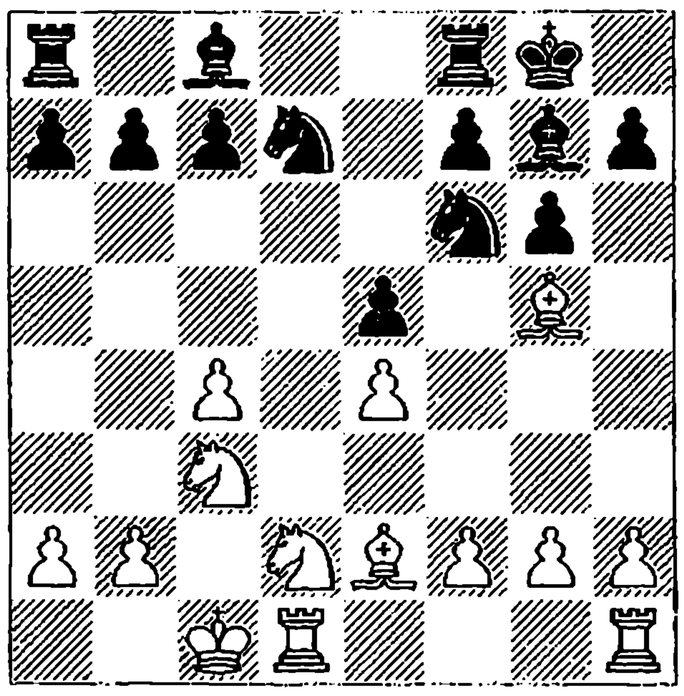
c2) The mainstream continuation is 11...c6 12 ♘e7+ ♔h8 13 ♗e3 *(D)* and now:


B

c21) 13...b6!? 14 g4! (14 ♖d6!? {A.Fedorov} 14...♘xe4 15 ♘xc8 ♘dc5 16 b4 ♘a4 seems to be double-edged; 14 ♘xc6 ♘xe4 is equal according to Frolov; 14 ♘xc8 ♖axc8 = is not dangerous for Black either, Rezan-A.Fedorov, Croatian Cht (Medulin) 2002) 14...♗b7!? (14...♘c5 15 ♘xe5 favours White, Savchenko-Frolov, Kiev (Platonov mem) 1995) 15 g5 ♖ae8! (if 15...♖fe8 16 gxf6 ♘xf6, then White gives up a knight for another pawn: 17 ♘xg6+! hxg6 18 ♘g5 ♔g8 19 c5! ♗h6 20 h4 with the initiative) 16 gxf6 ♘xf6 17 ♘d5! cxd5 18 exd5 ♖c8 19 ♔b1 with a complex position, which is possibly a bit better for White.

c22) 13...♖e8 (the most common choice) 14 ♘xc8 ♖axc8 (14...♖exc8 is also possible; an interesting game Shabalov-Kaidanov, Cardinal 1993 then continued 15 g4 ♖c7 16 ♘d2 ♗f8 17 g5 ♘e8 18 ♘b3 a5 19 a4 ♘d6 20 c5! ♘xe4 21 ♖xd7! ♖xd7 22 f3 and White, who has gained two minor pieces for a rook + two pawns, was perhaps slightly better) 15 ♘g5!? (this is tempting, but other continuations are more dangerous for Black: 15 ♘d2 ♗f8 16 ♘b3 b6 17 g4 ♘b8 18 ♗f3 c5 19 g5 ♘g8 20 ♗g4 ♖c7 21 h4 h5 22 ♗h3 ♘e7 23 ♘d2 ♘bc6 24 ♘b1 ♘d4 25 ♘c3, N.Ostojić-M.Marković, Yugoslav Cht (Cetinje) 1992, or 15 g4!? ♘f8 16 ♘d2! ♘6d7 17 ♘b3 ♖c7 18 c5 ♘e6 19 ♗c4 ♘df8, Jackelen-Nunn, Bundesliga 2001/2, with some advantage for White in both cases) 15...♔g8 (15...♖e7!?) 16 ♗g4 ♖c7 17 ♗xd7 ♘xd7 18 ♔c2 (18 ♖d3 h6 with approximate equality) 18...♗f8 19 ♗xa7? b6 20 ♖xd7 ♖xd7 21 ♗xb6 ♖a8! 22 ♖a1 c5 and Black is winning (Vojnović-Golubev, Yugoslavia rpd 1997), because 23 a4 ♖b7 24 a5 ♖xb6 25 axb6 ♖xa1 26 b7 ♗d6 does not help White.

We now return to the position after 11 ♘d2!? *(D)*:



B

11...♘c5?

An ambitious but erroneous move.

11...c6 is correct, acknowledging that White will be able to prevent ...♘c5, but in turn preventing ♘d5. 12 b4 (12 ♗e3 ♖e8 13 f3 ♗f8 14 ♘b3 ♘h5 15 g3 ♘g7 16 ♔b1 ♘e6 17 ♘a4 b6 18 ♖d2 ♖b8 19 ♗f1 c5 20 ♘c3 ♘d4 21 ♘d5 ♔g7 22 ♗h3 ♘f6 23 ♗xc8 ♘xd5 and Black solved all his problems in O.Moor-Glek, Swiss Cht 2004), and here:

a) 12...a5 13 a3 ♖e8 14 ♔b2! ♘f8 (14...b6!? was suggested by I.Belov, and if 15 b5, then 15...♗b7) 15 c5! ♘e6 16 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 17 ♘c4! axb4 18 axb4 ♘d4 19 ♘d6! (improving upon 19 ♘b6 ♖b8 20 ♗c4 ♗d8!, Andersson-Balashov, Moscow 1981) 19...♕f8 20 ♗c1 ♕h8 21 ♘a4 ♗e7 22 ♘b6 (Engqvist-T.Ernst, Swedish Ch (Haninge) 1997) and White is better, because 22...♗xd6 23 cxd6 ♕d8 24 f4! works well for him.

b) More cautious is 12...♖e8 13 ♔b2 (13 c5 a5! 14 a3 axb4 15 axb4 b6!, M.Haag-Kochyev, Balatonbereny open 1988) 13...♘f8!? 14 c5 ♘e6 15 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 16 ♘c4 ♘d4 17 ♘d6 ♖f8!? and, in comparison with the previous line, here the a-pawns are on their initial places. This difference is in Black's favour, as he shall be able to prepare ...b6 with counterplay.

12 ♘d5!

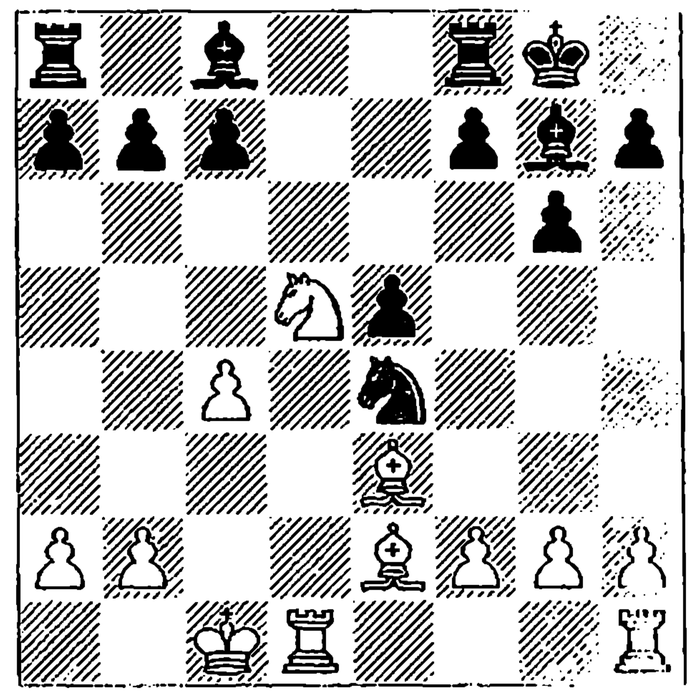
This move, a novelty at GM level, simply refutes Black's previous move. One of the preceding games with 11...♘c5 (used by Dydyshko-Popović, Cvitan and other strong players) was 12 ♗e3 ♘e6 13 ♘d5 c6 14 ♘xf6+ ♗xf6 15 ♘b3 ♗e7 16 ♔b1! (16 c5 b5) 16...a5!? 17 a4 c5 18 ♖d5! b6 19 ♖xe5 ♗d7 20 ♗d1! f6! 21 ♖d5 ♗xa4 22 ♘xc5 ♘xc5 23 ♗xc5 with a draw, O.Moor-Golubev, Swiss Ch (Scuol) 2001.

Alas, when playing against Lars Schandorff, I totally forgot about my previous experience with this line and walked directly into my opponent's opening preparation. Well, when one starts to forget one's recent games, it is a good reason to change the opening or, better, to write a book!

12...♘cxe4

12...♘xd5 13 cxd5 is clearly better for White who is threatening 14 ♗e7. Black's knight is simply misplaced on c5.

13 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 14 ♗e3! *(D)*



B

White is *much* better in all variations.

14...c6

Or 14...b6 15 ♗f3 f5 16 ♘xc7 (16 ♘e7+!? ♔f7 17 ♘xc8 ♖axc8 18 ♖d7+ ♔f6 19 ♗xe4 fxe4 20 ♖hd1) 16...♖b8 17 ♗xe4 (17 ♘b5!?) 17...fxe4 18 ♔b1, Kartachov-Evelev, Moscow (Petrosian mem) U-18 1998.

15 ♘e7+!

Of course, I was hoping for 15 ♘c7? ♖b8 with the idea 16 ♗xa7 ♗h6+ 17 ♔c2 ♗f5! 18 g4 ♘xf2+ 19 gxf5 ♘xh1.

15...♔h8 16 ♘xc8

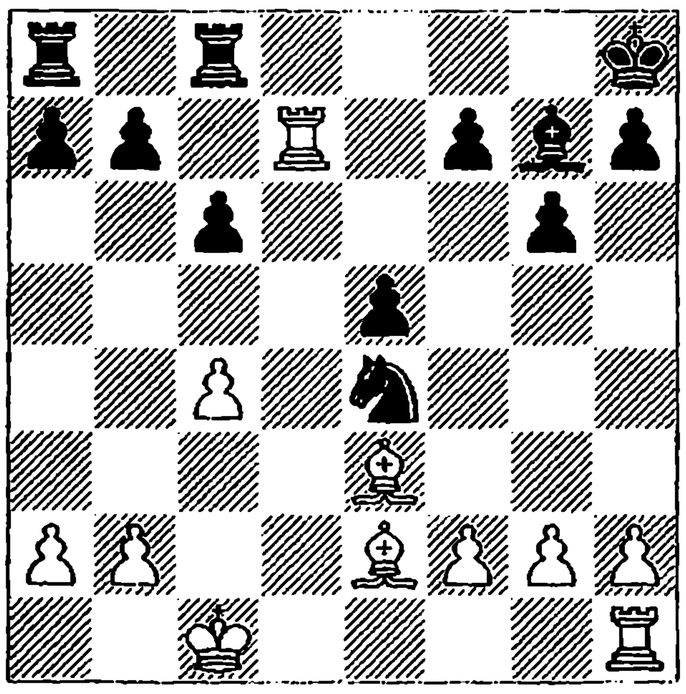
White's point is that he will regain the pawn and retain the initiative after Black captures the knight with either rook.

16...♖fxc8

Or 16...♖axc8 17 ♖d7 b6 (17...♖b8?! 18 ♗xa7 ♘f6 19 ♖c7 +–) 18 ♖xa7 ♖a8 19 ♖xa8!? ♖xa8 20 ♖d1!.

17 ♖d7 *(D)*

B



17...f5

Possibly the passive 17...b6 with the basic idea 18 ♖xf7 (18 f3!?; 18 ♗f3!?) 18...♘d6 19 ♖d7 ♘f5 gives Black slightly better drawing chances.

18 ♖xb7 f4

After 18...a5 19 ♖d1 f4 20 ♖dd7! fxe3 21 ♖xg7 exf2 22 ♖xh7+ ♔g8 23 ♖bg7+ ♔f8 24 ♖d7 ♔g8 25 c5 White wins.

19 ♗xa7 ♖d8

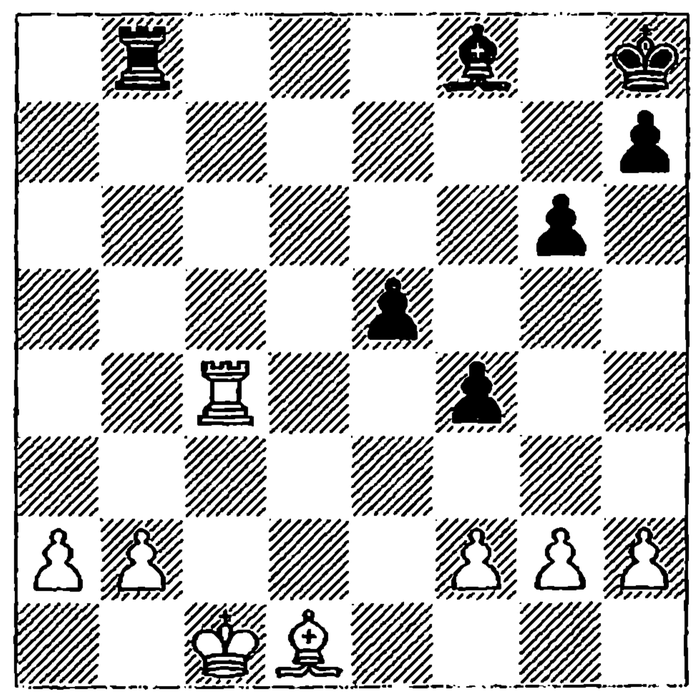
White's unpleasant threat was ♖d1-d7.

20 ♖d1 ♖xd1+ 21 ♗xd1 ♗f8 22 ♗b8!? ♘d6

22...♘c5 loses to 23 ♗xe5+ ♔g8 24 ♖b8!. Some kind of resistance could have been put up only by 22...♗g7!?.

23 ♖b6! ♘xc4 24 ♖xc6 ♖xb8 25 ♖xc4 *(D)*

B



With two passed pawns, White has obtained a technically winning position. The rest of the game does not present too much interest.

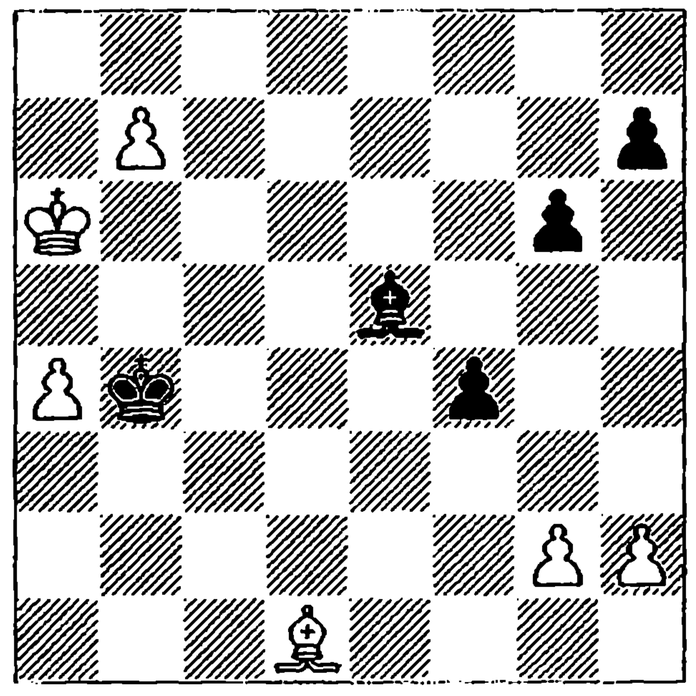
25...♗b4 26 ♗f3 ♗e1 27 ♖c2 ♗a5 28 ♖c5 ♗b6 29 ♖xe5 ♗xf2 30 ♖d5 ♗e3+ 31 ♔b1 ♖c8 32 a4 ♖c5 33 ♖xc5 ♗xc5 34 ♔c2 ♔g7 35 ♔c3 ♔f6 36 ♔c4 ♗e3 37 b4 ♔e5

Or 37...♔e7 38 ♔b5 ♗d2 39 a5!? ♔d6 40 ♔b6 ♗xb4 41 a6 ♗c5+ 42 ♔b7.

38 ♔b5 ♔d4 39 ♔a6 ♔c4 40 b5 ♔b4 41 b6 ♗d4 42 b7 ♗e5 43 ♗d1 *(D)*

43 ♔a7 is a simpler way to win.

B



43...f3! 44 ♗xf3 ♔xa4 45 h4

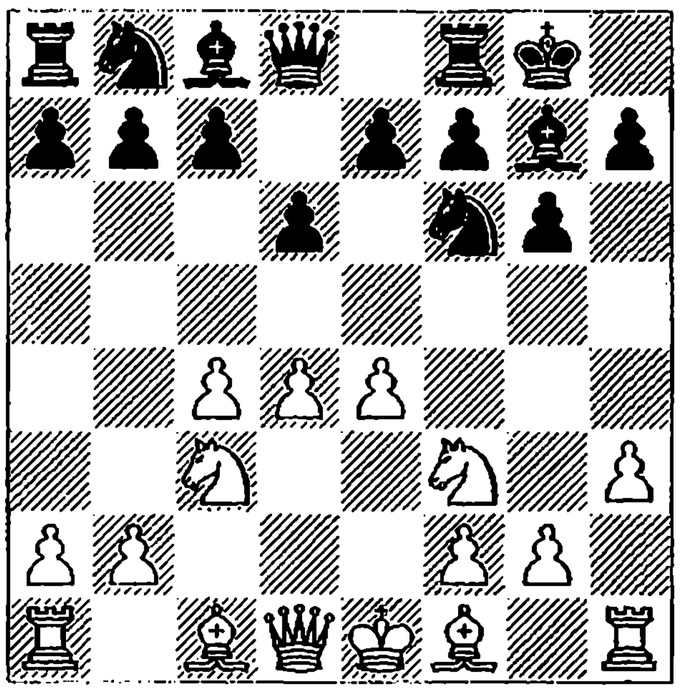
Black's last hope was 45 ♔a7 ♗xh2 46 b8♕ ♗xb8+ 47 ♔xb8 ♔b5 48 ♔c7 ♔c5 49 ♔d7 ♔d4 50 ♔e6 ♔e3 51 ♔f6?? (51 ♔e5!) 51...♔f4 52 ♔g7 h5 53 ♔xg6 h4 with a draw.

45...♗b8 46 ♗e4 ♔b4 47 g4 ♔c5 48 ♗xg6! h6 49 g5 hxg5 50 h5 g4 51 h6 g3 52 ♗e4 ♔d4 53 ♗g2 1-0

6 Lines with h3

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 5 ♘f3 0-0 6 h3 *(D)*

This pawn move is not nearly as popular as the Classical System with 6 ♗e2. Nevertheless, it occurs quite often at all levels. It is enough to say that in 2000, when Ruslan Ponomariov played the KI with Black most actively, he suffered two defeats in this very line (though it is also true that these losses against Dao and Ivanchuk were not exactly related to the opening).



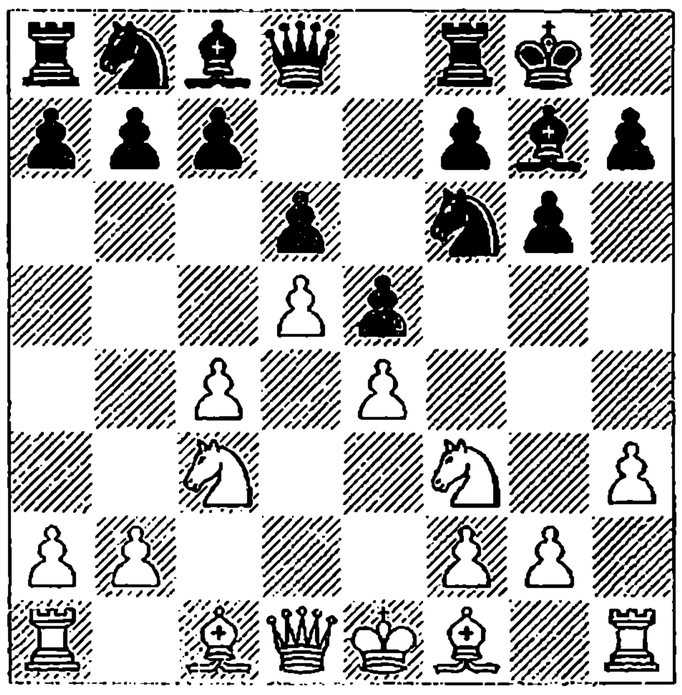
Most often Black plays:

6...e5

In this chapter I shall share with readers my mild scepticism about 6...c5, and will also consider 6...♘a6, which is an interesting alternative.

Now 7 dxe5 does not promise the better chances to White, and usually he plays:

7 d5 *(D)*



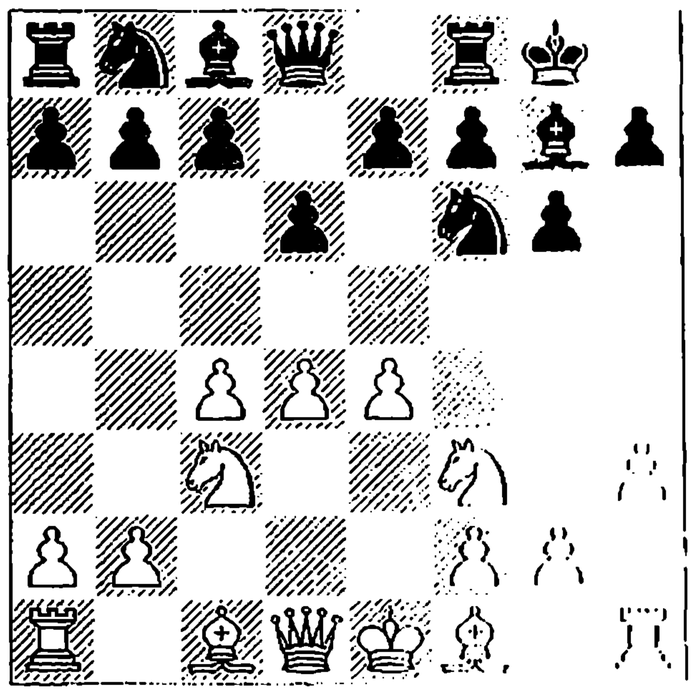
So, what are the advantages of the move h3 in comparison with ♗e2? The disadvantage – a delay in development – is obvious. By playing h3, White prepares both ♗e3 (followed by ♘d2!, especially if Black attacks the e4 pawn with ...♘c5), without needing to fear ...♘g4. Also, h3 obviously prepares to play g4, which sometimes can be really unpleasant for Black. Additionally, ♗g5 is also an idea for White now, because after ...h6 the bishop can safely return to e3. The play in the 6 h3 line is rather tricky, because both sides can try to develop an initiative on either flank. (Thus, Black's play with ...c6 works better after White's g4.) I think that Black is not in theoretical danger in this line, but, as usual, it is best for him to be prepared and to know what to do. At the end of the chapter, the set-up 5 h3 0-0 6 ♗g5, which has been popular in the last decade, will be considered as well. The ideas and lines of these two systems often intersect with each other.

Game 23

R. Redjepagić – Golubev

Skopje 1991

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 5 h3 0-0 6 ♘f3 *(D)*



6...e5

The most common move.

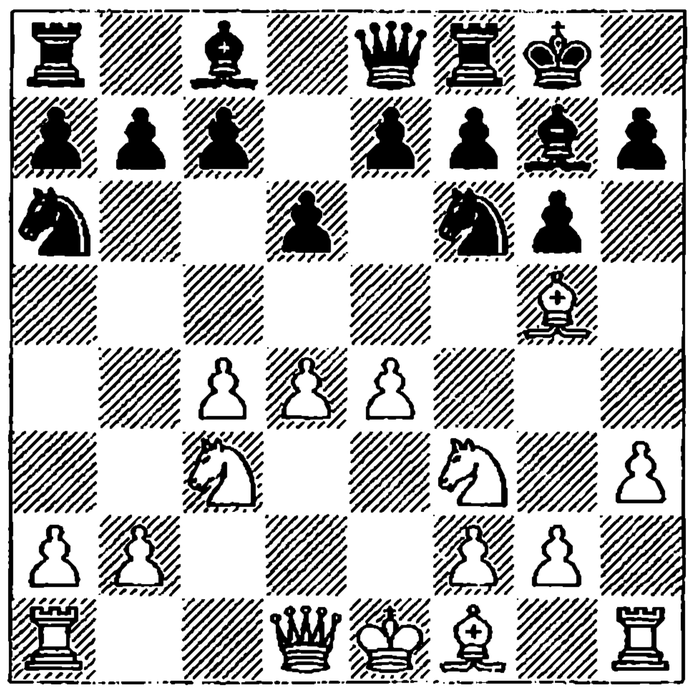
6...♘bd7 is possible, as in most branches of the King's Indian. However, the much more flexible 6...♘a6!? is a more important alternative. Then:

a) 7 ♗e3 and here:

a1) 7...e5 and now 8 d5 transposes to the 6...e5 7 d5 ♘a6 8 ♗e3 line, while 8 dxe5 dxe5 9 c5 is an interesting recent idea: 9...♘b4 10 ♕a4 a5 11 ♖d1 (Karpov-Istratescu, Bucharest rpd (8) 2005) 11...♗d7 with chances for both sides.

a2) Black can also try 7...♕e8!? 8 g4!? c5 9 ♗g2 (9 d5 e6 10 ♗d3 exd5 11 exd5 h5 12 g5 ♘d7 gives Black sufficient counterplay, Piket-Golubev, Dutch open blitz Ch (Dordrecht) 2003) 9...cxd4 10 ♘xd4 ♘c5. Perhaps White has somewhat better prospects here, but the tempting 11 ♘db5?! ♗e6 12 ♘c7 ♕c6 13 ♘xa8 ♗xc4 resulted in a position with good compensation for Black in Crouch-Miles, Calcutta open 1994.

b) 7 ♗g5. Now 7...e5 8 d5 transposes to 6...e5 7 d5 ♘a6 8 ♗g5, but normally by playing an early ...♘a6 Black is seeking to avoid that line, and so he plays 7...♕e8!? *(D)*.



W

Now Black plans ...e5, but if White continues with g4, then Black can change his mind and go for ...c5. White has tried many options:

b1) 8 a3 e5 9 dxe5 (9 d5!? ♘h5 10 g4 ♘f4 deserves study) 9...dxe5 10 b4 c6 11 c5 ♘c7 planning ...♘e6, and Black's chances can hardly be worse, Piket-Van Mechelen, Antwerp open 1998.

b2) 8 g4 c5! (8...♔h8 9 ♗e2 e5 10 d5 ♗d7 11 ♘d2 ♘g8 12 h4! f6 13 ♗e3 f5 14 gxf5 gxf5 15 exf5 ♗xf5 16 ♘de4 ♗h6 17 ♗g5 ♗g6 18 ♕d2 ♖f4! 19 ♗xf4 ♗xf4 gave Black some compensation for the exchange in Kapnisis-Kotronias, Greek Ch (Athens) 2004, but it seems that White's play can be improved along the way) 9 ♗g2!? (9 d5 e6 has also been tested, and leads to chances for both sides) 9...cxd4 (9...h5?! 10 ♗xf6! exf6 11 gxh5 f5 12 hxg6 fxe4 13 ♘g5! fxg6 14 ♘cxe4 ♗xd4 15 0-0 with an initiative for White, P.H.Nielsen-Michelakis, Copenhagen open 2003) 10 ♘xd4 ♘c5 11 0-0 ♗d7 12 ♗e3 (now White is a tempo down in comparison with Crouch-Miles) 12...♖c8 13 ♖c1 a6 with sufficient counterplay for Black, B.Alterman-Kasparov, ICC blitz 1998.

b3) 8 ♕c2 h6! (after 8...e5 9 dxe5 dxe5 10 ♘d5, 10...♕e6 11 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 12 c5 gives White some initiative, and 10...♘xd5!? 11 cxd5 f5 is interesting, but not too reliable) 9 ♗e3 e5 10 dxe5 dxe5 11 ♘d5 (11 c5 ♘b4!?; 11 a3!?) 11...♘h5 (11...♘d7! might be even stronger) 12 a3 ♔h7 13 ♗e2 c6 14 ♘b4 ♘c7 15 ♗c5 ♖g8 with decent chances for Black, Sevostianov-Golubev, Ukrainian Cht (Alushta) 1995.

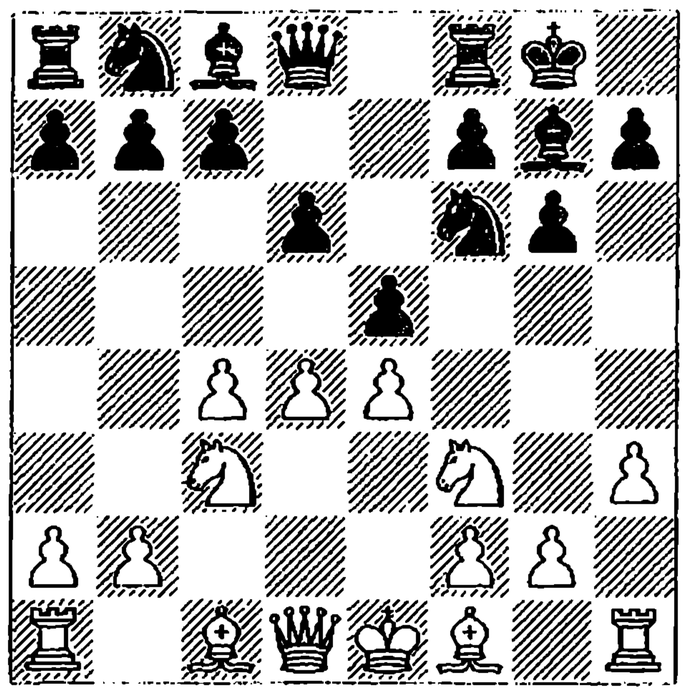
b4) 8 ♗d3 e5!, with the point 9 d5 ♘h5, gives Black good counterplay.

b5) 8 ♗e2 e5 9 d5 ♘h5 10 g3 f5 11 exf5 gxf5 12 ♘h4 ♘f6 13 ♕c2!? (13 g4 ♘e4!? 14 ♘xe4 fxe4 15 ♕c2 ♘c5 16 ♗e3 ♕e7 17 ♘g2 ♘d3+ 18 ♗xd3 exd3 19 ♕xd3 ♗d7 with compensation for Black, Almeida-Hillarp Persson, Barcelona open 2003) 13...♘b4 (after 13...h6, the precise 14 ♗d2! ♘c5 15 ♗e3! led to some problems for Black in Kacheishvili-Vouldis, Greece-Georgia (Athens) 2003) 14 ♕b3 a5 15 a3 ♘a6 16 ♕c2 ♘c5 (better is 16...♗d7, as suggested by Notkin in his annotations for *Chess Today*) 17 ♗e3 b6 (17...♘fe4 18 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 19 g4!; 17...♗d7!? 18 ♗xc5 dxc5 19 0-0-0 – Notkin) 18 0-0-0 a4 19 ♔b1 ♖b8 20 ♘b5 ♖b7 (the rook on b7 looks extremely unimpressive, but Black probably wanted to cover the c7-pawn and prevent ♘a7) 21 g4! f4 22 ♗xc5 bxc5 23 g5 e4!?. We have been following Kacheishvili-Smirin, Global CC open (Minneapolis) 2005, where White should have played 24 gxf6 ♗xf6 and now, probably, 25 ♖dg1+ ♔h8 26 ♖g4!? ♕e7 (I don't believe that 26...♕e5 27 f3!? can be an improvement for Black) 27 ♖xf4 ♗xh4 28 ♖xf8+ ♕xf8 29 ♗g4! with advantage – Notkin.

We now return to 6...e5 *(D)*:

7 d5

7 dxe5 dxe5 8 ♕xd8 ♖xd8 9 ♗g5 is rather innocuous, but still requires a precise reaction:



a) 9...♖e8?! 10 ♘d5! ♘xd5 11 cxd5 c6 12 ♗c4 is an improved version for White of the Classical Exchange Variation (5 ♘f3 0-0 6 ♗e2 e5 7 dxe5).

b) 9...♘bd7!? 10 0-0-0 ♖f8 is playable, even if a bit better for White.

c) 9...c6 10 ♘xe5 ♖e8 11 0-0-0 ♘a6 does not entirely equalize after 12 ♘f3! (12 ♖d6 ♗e6 13 ♘g4 ♘xg4 14 hxg4 ♗xg4 15 f3 ♗e6 16 g4 ♘c5 = Godjaev-Golubev, USSR Army Cht (Leningrad) 1989) 12...♘c5 13 ♘d2 h6 14 ♗e3 ♘fxe4 15 ♘dxe4 ♘xe4 16 ♘xe4 ♖xe4 17 ♖d8+ ♔h7 18 ♗d3 ♖e6 19 ♖e1 (Gagarin-Yuferov, Moscow 1991), with the idea 19...♗f6 20 ♖f8 ♔g7? 21 ♗xh6+ ♔xh6 22 ♖xe6 ♗g5+ 23 ♖e3.

d) The simplest is 9...♘a6! (the move which is not good in the Classical Exchange Variation works well here) 10 ♘d5 ♖d6 11 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 12 b4 (12 ♖c1 ♗d8 13 c5 ♖e6 was tested several times with decent results for Black; unlike in the Classical, 12 ♘xf6+ ♖xf6 13 ♘xe5 does not give White anything here, because after 13...♖e6 14 ♘g4 Black takes the e4-pawn with check!). Now:

d1) In Kocovski-Golubev, Skopje 1991 I blundered by 12...♔g7?!, when White could have won the exchange by 13 b5! (instead of the game continuation 13 0-0-0?! c6 14 c5 ♖d8 15 ♘xf6 ♖xd1+ 16 ♔xd1 ♔xf6 17 ♗xa6 bxa6 18 ♔c2 ♖b8 19 a3 ♗e6), when 13...♖xd5 (13...♘c5? 14 ♘xc7 ♖b8 15 ♘e8+) 14 cxd5 ♘c5 gives Black some, but hardly sufficient, compensation.

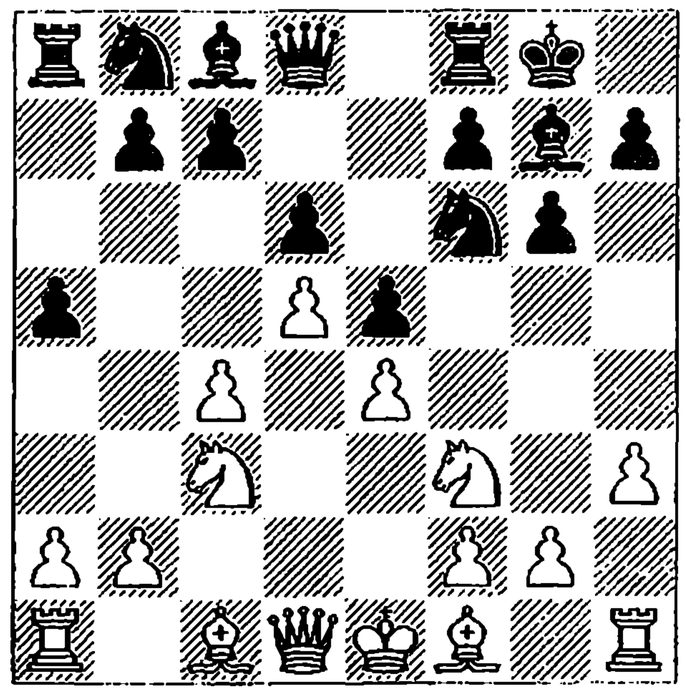
d2) Correct is 12...c6 13 ♘xf6+ ♖xf6 14 a3 c5 15 b5 ♘c7 = as in Larsen-Hellers, Esbjerg 1988 and other games.

7...♘a6

The most popular choice, but Black has at least two important alternatives, even if we don't count 7...♘bd7, which usually leads to a slightly better position for White after 8 ♗e3! ♘c5 9 ♘d2 a5 (this will be mentioned below, via the move-order 7...♘a6 8 ♗e3 ♘c5).

7...♘h5!? will be examined separately in the next game.

There remains 7...a5 *(D)*, when White has his usual choice between ♗e3 and ♗g5:



a) 8 ♗e3!? ♘a6 9 g4 (9 ♘d2 ♘d7!) 9...c6 (9...♘c5 10 ♘d2 – 7...♘a6 8 ♗e3 ♘c5 9 ♘d2 a5 10 g4) 10 ♘d2 is an interesting, but insufficiently explored line. I imagine that White might be a bit better.

b) 8 ♗g5 (more popular) 8...♘a6 and now:

b1) 9 ♗e2 transposes to Zviagintsev's line 5 ♘f3 0-0 6 ♗e2 e5 7 d5 a5 8 h3 ♘a6 9 ♗g5 (see the note to White's 8th move in Game 18).

b2) 9 g4 ♘c5 10 ♘d2 c6 (a rare idea is 10...♕d7!? 11 ♖g1 ♘e8 12 h4 f5 13 gxf5 gxf5 14 ♕e2 f4 15 0-0-0 ♔h8 16 h5 ♖g8 17 ♗g2 ½-½ Shusterovich-Kalin, corr. 1993) 11 ♕f3!? (11 ♗e2 ♗d7 with decent prospects for Black; then 12 a4 ♕b6 13 ♕c2 ♖fc8 14 ♔f1 cxd5 15 exd5 ½-½ was Bagirov-Shirov, Daugavpils 1990) 11...a4 12 ♗e2 with a complicated position, which has occurred several times in practice. The pin is a bit unpleasant for Black, but White does not have too many constructive ideas.

b3) 9 ♘d2 and now:

b31) 9...♕e8 is met by 10 ♗e2.

b32) 9...♘c5!? 10 ♗e2 transposes to 5 ♘f3 0-0 6 ♗e2 e5 7 d5 a5 8 h3 ♘a6 9 ♗g5 ♘c5 10 ♘d2, where Black has the flexible 10...♗d7, and after g4 Black plays ...c6, while after 0-0 he starts to play on the kingside by ...h6.

b33) 9...h6 10 ♗e3 and now 10...♘c5 11 ♗e2 gives White a typical slight advantage,

while 10...♘d7 11 g4 ♘dc5!? can be answered by 12 ♖g1!?, rather than 12 ♘b3?! ♕h4! 13 ♘xa5 f5, Krasenkow-Blehm, Polish Ch 2000.

b34) The Lanka/Bologan/Shirov school of the King's Indian prefers 9...c6 *(D)*:

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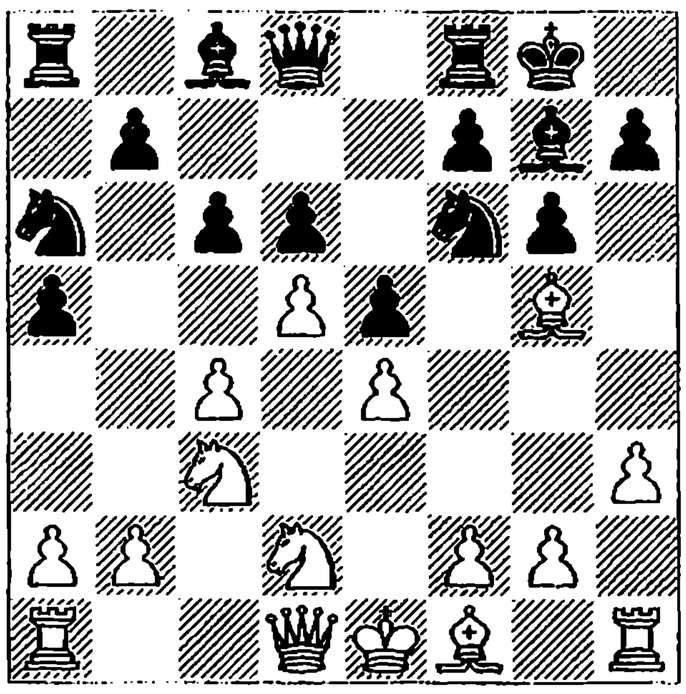

b341) 10 g4 gives Black good chances of counterplay: 10...♗d7 (10...♕b6 is also possible) 11 ♕f3 (11 ♗e2 ♘c5 12 h4? ♕b6!, Kacheishvili-Bologan, Rethymnon ECC 2003, with the idea 13 ♖b1 ♗xg4! 14 ♗xg4 ♘d3+ 15 ♔e2 ♘xg4 16 ♔xd3? ♘xf2+) 11...a4!? 12 ♘xa4?! h6! (not 12...cxd5 13 ♘c3!) 13 ♗xf6 (13 ♗h4 g5! 14 ♗g3 cxd5) 13...♗xf6 14 ♘c3 ♗g5! with excellent compensation for the pawn, Kacheishvili-Movsesian, Rethymnon ECC 2003.

b342) 10 ♗e2! h6 (10...♗d7 11 0-0 gives White a minimal advantage) 11 ♗e3 ♘d7 12 g4 ♘dc5 13 ♘b3 ♗d7 14 ♘xc5 ♘xc5 15 h4 a4 16 ♕d2 cxd5 17 cxd5 ♔h7 (17...♕a5?! 18 ♗xh6 ♗xh6 19 ♕xh6 a3 20 b4! ♕xb4 21 ♖c1, Krasenkow-Shirov, Bundesliga 1997/8) 18 h5 g5 is equal according to Krasenkow, but it seems to be "more equal" for White than for Black.

We now return to 7...♘a6 *(D)*:

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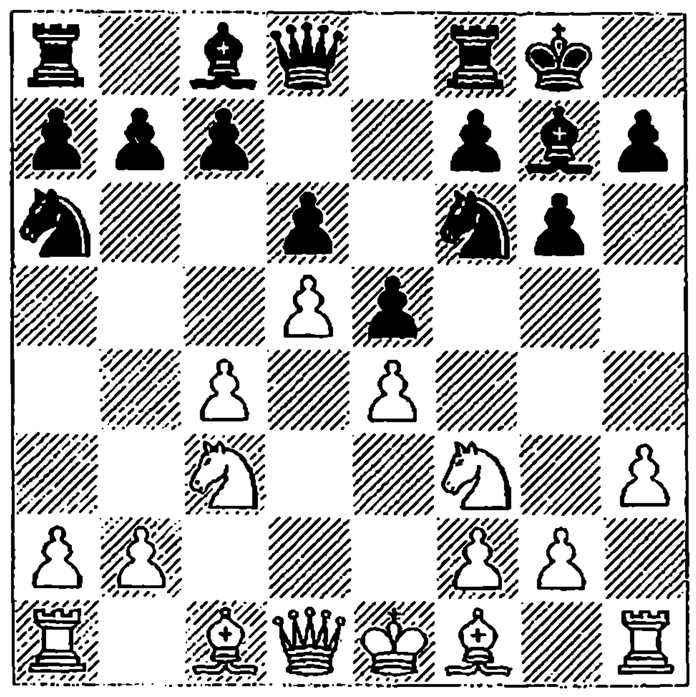


8 ♗e3

Or:

a) The immediate 8 g4 is rare. 8...♘c5 9 ♕c2 a5 10 ♗e3 c6 11 g5?! ♘h5 12 0-0-0 cxd5 (12...♕c7!? has the idea 13 ♗xc5 dxc5 14 d6 ♕d8 15 ♘a4 b6 16 ♕b3 ♖a6 ∓) 13 ♘xd5 (13 ♗xc5 dxc5 14 ♘xd5 ♗e6!? 15 ♘f6+ ♗xf6 16 ♖xd8 ♗xd8 gives Black good compensation for the queen) 13...b6 14 ♘d2 ♗b7 15 h4 ♘f4! with very good counterplay for Black, Dao Thien Hai-Ponomariov, New Delhi FIDE KO 2000.

b) 8 ♗g5 is somewhat more popular than the text-move. Now:

b1) 8...c6 9 ♘d2! has led to good results for White in the games played so far.

b2) 8...h6 9 ♗e3 ♘c5 (9...♘h5 10 ♘h2!?) 10 ♘d2 is typically slightly better for White. Still, this kind of position is playable for Black, who also has his chances; e.g., 10...a5 11 g4 ♗d7 12 ♕c2 (12 ♗e2 is more to the point) 12...c6 13 ♘b3 ♘xb3 14 axb3 cxd5 15 cxd5 ♘h7! with good counterplay, Arbakov-Golubev, Berlin open 1993.

b3) The main line is 8...♕e8!? 9 g4 (9 a3!? – 6...♘a6 7 ♗g5 ♕e8 8 a3 e5 9 d5) 9...♘d7 10 ♖g1 ♔h8 11 ♕d2 ♘dc5 with chances for both sides.

8...♘h5 *(D)*

Or:

a) 8...c6 9 g4 ♗d7 10 ♘d2 is a rare continuation. Now 10...h5 11 ♗e2 hxg4 12 hxg4 ♘h7 13 ♘f3 ♗f6 14 ♖g1 ♘g5 15 ♘xg5 ♗xg5 16 ♕d2 ♗xe3 17 ♕xe3 led to quite an unpleasant position for Black in Klimenok-Mishin, corr. 1993.

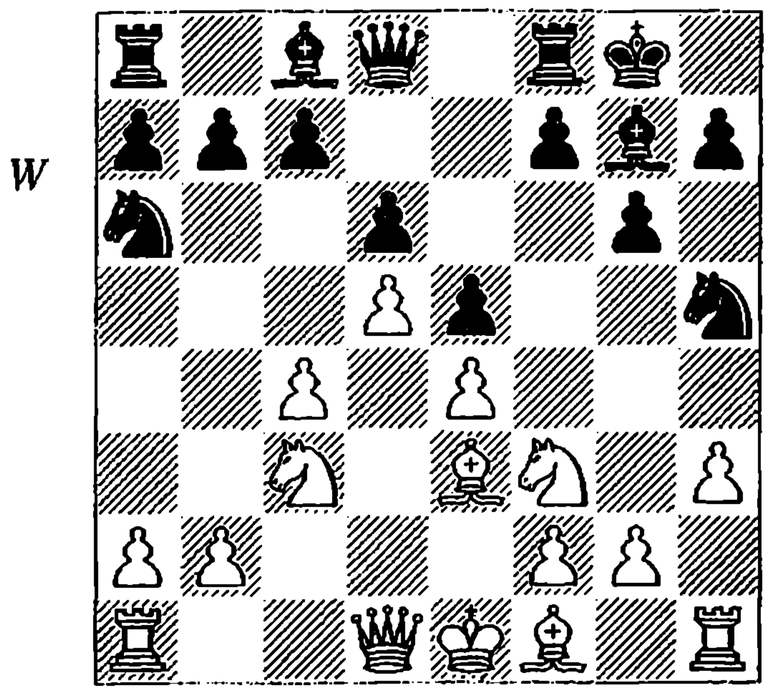
b) 8...♘c5 9 ♘d2 a5 10 g4 has been tested hundreds of times, as has the same position but with black pawn on h6, which we considered above. Now:

b1) 10...♗d7 is strongly met by 11 ♗e2! with the idea of 12 g5.

b2) 10...♘e8, and then:

b21) 11 h4 f5 12 gxf5 gxf5 13 ♕c2 (13 ♕e2!? ♘e6?! 14 dxe6 f4 15 ♗h3 fxe3 16 ♕xe3 c6 17 ♘a4 favours White, Agzamov-Loginov, Tashkent 1980) 13...♘e6!? (a typical trick) 14 exf5 (14 dxe6 f4 and Black regains the piece) 14...♘d4 15 ♗xd4 exd4 16 ♘ce4 ♗xf5 17 ♗d3 ♘f6 18 0-0-0 ♗xe4 19 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 20 ♗xe4 ♕f6 with approximate equality, A.Shmirin-Golubev, Pavlikeni open 1990.

b22) The strongest is probably 11 ♕e2! f5 12 gxf5 gxf5 13 0-0-0, as in Piket-Van Wely, Dutch Ch (Amsterdam) 1994.



9 ♘g1

This slightly artificial method to fight against ...f5 was introduced by Bulgarian IM Andonov.

Other possibilities:

a) 9 ♘d2 ♕e8 10 ♘b3 f5 leads to double-edged play. For example, 11 c5!? f4 12 ♗d2 ♘xc5 13 ♘xc5 dxc5 14 b4 f3 (14...♘f6!? 15 bxc5 ♕e7, Florean-Dochev, Pardubice open 2000) 15 gxf3 cxb4 16 ♘b5 ♕d8 17 ♕b3 ♔h8 18 ♗xb4 ♖f6 19 ♕a3 ♖f7 20 d6 cxd6 21 ♗c4 d5 22 ♗xd5 ♖d7 23 0-0-0 ♘f4, Tritt-Alves, ICCF e-mail 2001.

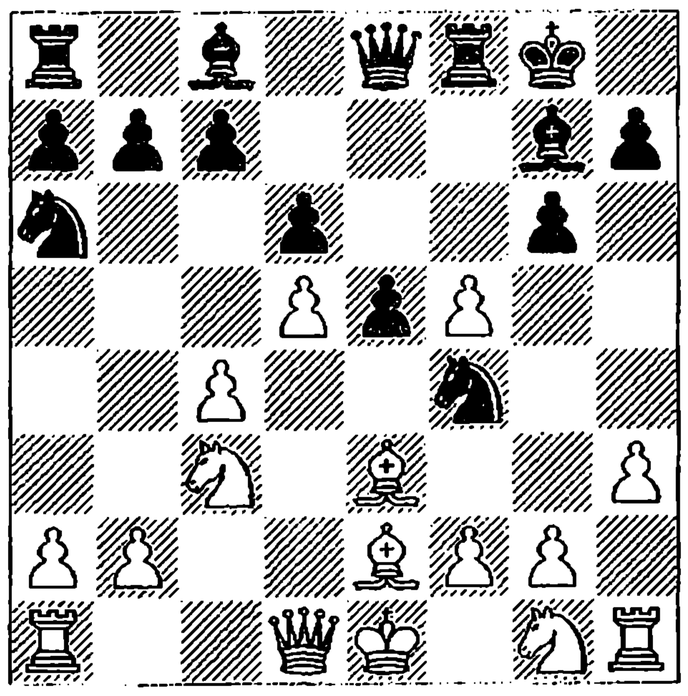
b) 9 ♘h2 ♕e8 10 ♗e2 f5!? (10...♘f4 11 ♗f3 f5 12 0-0 is a bit better for White, because Black has trouble finding a plan) 11 exf5 (11 ♗xh5 gxh5 12 g4 hxg4 13 hxg4 fxe4 14 ♘xe4 b5!? with counterplay) 11...♘f4! (this pawn sacrifice was introduced by Kasparov in 1990) 12 ♗xf4 exf4 13 fxg6 ♕xg6 14 ♔f1 (the position after 14 ♘f3!? can also occur in the 9 ♘g1 line) 14...♘c5 15 ♘f3 with complicated play, where Black has compensation for the pawn. (Instead, Chernin-J.Polgar, New Delhi 1990 continued 15 ♖c1?! ♗f5 16 ♘f3 ♗f6! 17 ♔g1 ♔h8 18 ♔h2 ♖g8 19 ♖g1 ♕h6! 20 ♗f1 ♖g7 21 b4 ♘d7 22 ♗d3 ♖xg2+!! 23 ♖xg2 ♗xh3 24 ♘e4 ♘e5! 25 ♘xe5 ♗xe5 –+.)

c) 9 a3 f5 10 b4 leads to unclear play with reasonable chances for Black after, for example, 10...♔h8!? 11 ♖c1 c5 12 dxc6 bxc6, as in Flear-Cvitan, Berne open 1993.

9...♕e8 10 ♗e2 f5!?

A decent alternative is 10...♘f4 11 ♗f3 f5 12 g3 ♘b4!, as in Lukov-V.Gurevich, Werfen open 1990.

11 exf5 ♘f4 *(D)*



12 ♗f3?

White probably simply missed Black's reply.

Necessary was 12 ♗xf4 exf4 13 fxg6 ♕xg6 and now 14 ♘f3!? deserves attention. Then 14...♕xg2 15 ♖g1 ♕xh3 looks a bit risky for Black, but he can instead simply continue development by 14...♗d7!?.

12...e4!

Totally destroying White's position.

13 ♘xe4

Or 13 f6 exf3 14 fxg7 ♘xg2+ with a huge advantage for Black.

13...♗xf5 14 ♘c3 ♘d3+ 15 ♔d2 ♘xf2! 16 ♕e1

16 ♗xf2 ♗h6+ and Black mates.

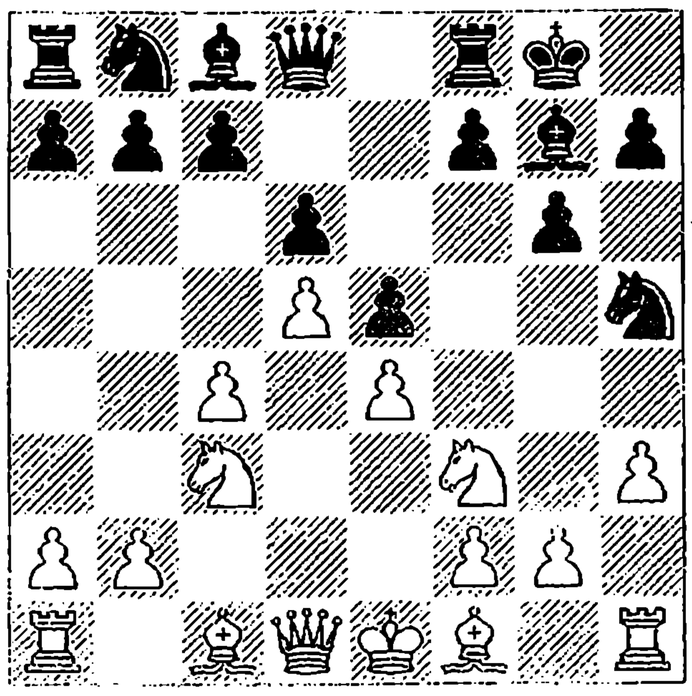
16...♘xh1 17 ♘ge2 ♘b4 0-1

Game 24

Bosch – Golubev

Dutch Open (Dieren) 1999

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 5 h3 0-0 6 ♘f3 e5 7 d5 ♘h5 *(D)*



8 ♘h2!

This retreat is one of White's specific ideas in the 6 h3 line and is the best move here. Otherwise:

a) 8 g3 allows 8...f5, which gives Black good counterplay after 9 ♗g2 ♘a6!? 10 0-0 f4 (or 10...♘f6).

b) 8 ♘d2 ♕e8!? (8...♘a6 9 g3 ♗h6!? 10 ♗e2 ♘g7 11 ♘f3 ♗xc1 12 ♕xc1 f5 13 ♕h6 ♕e7 with chances for both sides, I.Sokolov-Xie Jun, Amsterdam (Donner mem) 1994) 9 g3 (9 ♗e2 ♘f4 10 ♗f3? ♘d3+) 9...f5 and Black is not worse.

c) 8 ♗e3 f5 (8...♘a6 – 7...♘a6 8 ♗e3 ♘h5) 9 exf5 gxf5 10 ♘xe5?! (10 ♘g5!?) 10...♕e8! 11 ♘d3 f4 12 ♗e2 fxe3 13 ♗xh5 exf2++ 14 ♔f1 ♕e7 with a promising position for Black, Dzindzichashvili-Hébert, Lone Pine 1981.

8...♕e8

This is Black's predominant move in practice (preparing ...f5). However, it is not necessarily best. Other possibilities:

a) 8...♗f6 has only been tried once, and without success: 9 ♗e2 ♘g7 (9...♘f4 10 ♗f3 with the idea 11 h4 and 12 g3) 10 h4! ♗xh4 11 ♕d2! h5 12 ♕h6 ♗e7 13 g4 g5 14 gxh5 with a clear advantage for White, Larsen-Kavalek, Solingen (5) 1970.

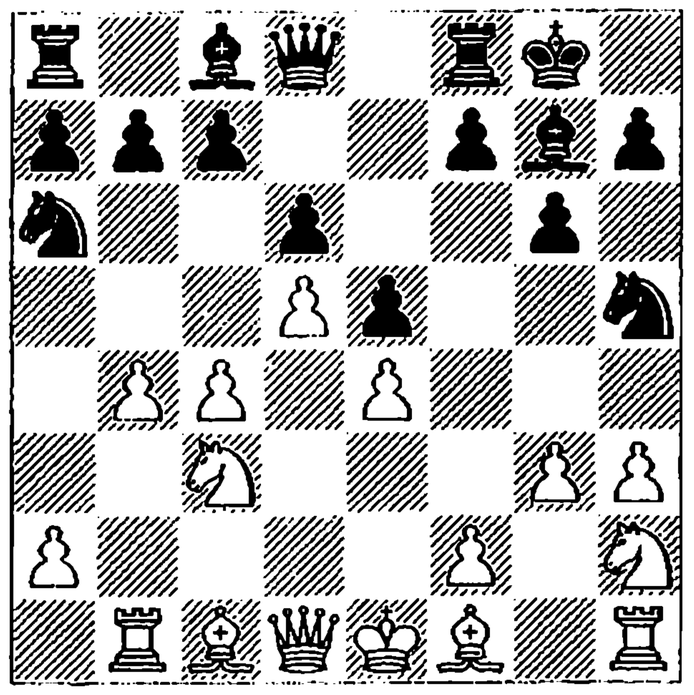
b) 8...a5 9 g3 ♘a6 10 ♗e2 and now:

b1) 10...♘c5 11 ♗xh5 gxh5 and instead of 12 g4 hxg4 13 hxg4 c6 (13...♕h4 14 ♗e3 h5 15 ♔d2! hxg4 16 ♘f3 and now 16...♕d8 17 ♕g1! {Bagirov-Shaked, Linares open 1997} or 16...♕f6 17 ♘h4!) 14 ♕f3 ♕h4 15 ♗d2 b5 16 cxb5 cxb5 17 ♘xb5 f5! with counterplay, Gschnitzer-Uhlmann, Bundesliga 1992/3, stronger is 12 ♗e3! f5 13 ♗xc5 dxc5 14 ♕xh5 and White is better – Ponomariov & Golubev.

b2) 10...♘f6!? 11 ♘g4 (11 g4) 11...h5 (the alternative 11...♘xg4 12 hxg4 appears to be somewhat better for White: 12...f5 13 gxf5 gxf5 14 ♗d3 ♘c5 15 ♗c2) 12 ♘xf6+ ♗xf6 13 h4 (½-½ Bagirov-Golubev, Senden open 1994) 13...♘c5 14 ♗e3 ♗g7 (or 14...♔g7 15 ♕d2 ♖h8 16 0-0-0 a4 17 f4, Krasenkow-P.Cramling, Stockholm open 1994/5) 15 ♕d2 (15 g4!?) 15...f5 16 f3 a4 17 0-0-0 a3 18 b3 f4 19 gxf4 ♖xf4 with chances for both sides.

c) 8...♘a6!? is a very important alternative: 9 g3 (9 ♗e3 transposes to 7...♘a6 8 ♗e3 ♘h5 9 ♘h2; 9 ♗e2?! ♘f4 10 ♗f3 f5 11 g3 ♘xh3 12 ♗g2 f4 13 ♘f3 ♘g5 favours Black – Ponomariov) 9...♘c5 (with the idea 10...a5; otherwise: 9...♕e8?! 10 ♗e2! ♘f6 11 g4 ♘c5 12 ♕c2 ♗d7 13 ♘f1 a5 14 ♘g3 favours White, Pablo Marin-Roa, Spanish Ch (Linares) 1990; 9...c6 10 ♗e2 ♘f6 11 h4 ♘c5 12 ♗f3 h5!? with the idea ...a5, ...♗d7, ...cxd5 and ...b5 – Ponomariov) 10 b4 (10 ♗e2 ♘f6 11 ♗f3 ♗xh3! Ponomariov; 10 ♗e3!? a5 11 ♗e2!? ♘f6 12 ♗xc5 dxc5 13 ♗g4 with unclear play, Hohelj-Belkhodja, Paris open 1994; 10 ♗g2 a5 11 ♗e3 ♗d7 12 ♘g4?! ♕e8!, Golubev-Ponomariov, Kramatorsk blitz 2000) 10...♘a6 11 ♖b1 *(D)*.

B



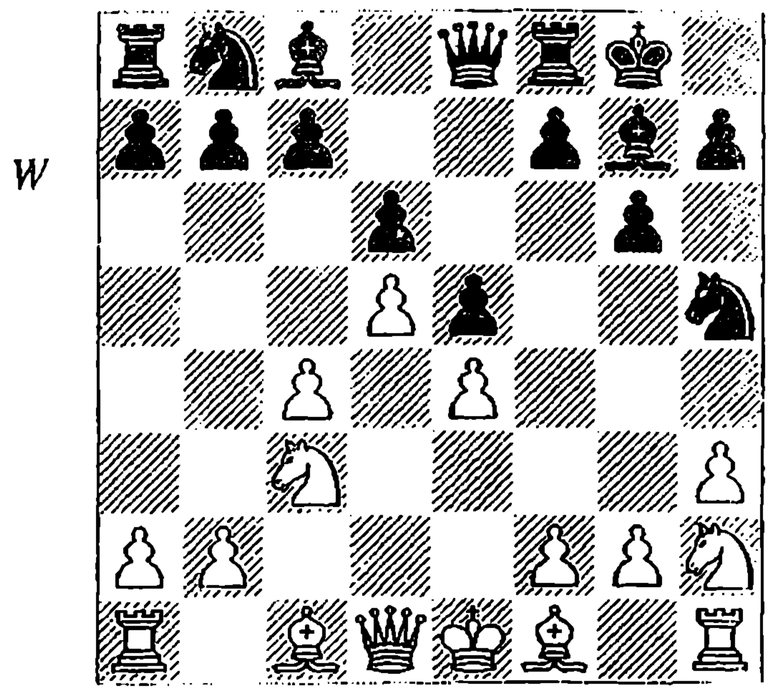
Black has lost two tempi on ...♘a6-c5-a6 but White's king is still in the centre while his position is a bit weakened. This double-edged position occurred in the first ever game between Vasily Ivanchuk and Ruslan Ponomariov, which they played in China. In 2000 it was annotated at my old website, *Ukrainian Chess Online*, by IM (now GM) Drozdovsky, and then (separately) by both players themselves. The game and variations are exceedingly complex. Let's take a brief look: 11...f5 (11...c6!? 12 ♗e2 ♘f6 13 h4 cxd5 14 cxd5 ♗d7 with unclear play – Ivanchuk) 12 exf5 (not 12 c5?! dxc5 13 ♗xa6 cxb4 – Ponomariov; 12 ♗g2!? was suggested by Ivanchuk, who believes that White retains a slight advantage in the following variations: 12...f4 13 g4 f3! 14 ♘xf3 ♘f4 15 ♗xf4 and now 15...exf4 16 e5 dxe5 17 ♘e4 or 15...♖xf4 16 ♘e2 ♖xe4 17 ♘d2; or 12...♘f6 13 0-0!? ♘xe4 14 ♘xe4 fxe4 15 h4 ♗f5 16 ♗g5 ♗f6 17 ♗e3) and now Black faced an important choice:

c1) The game continued 12...♗xf5 13 ♖b3 (13 ♗d3?? loses to 13...e4 14 ♘xe4 ♖e8 15 ♕c2 ♕e7 16 f3 ♘xg3 – Drozdovsky) 13...♕f6!? 14 ♗e3 (14 ♕d2 e4 15 ♘d1 e3 16 ♖xe3 and

here 16...♖ae8 17 ♘g4 ♕a1 18 a3 ♖e4 with compensation for the pawn – Ponomariov or 16...♗h6!? 17 f4 ♖ae8! {my analysis}; Ivanchuk mentions 14 ♗e2? ♗c2 15 ♕xc2 ♕xf2+ 16 ♔d1 ♘xg3 17 ♘e4? ♕d4+ and Black wins, 14 ♗g2 ♗d3! 15 ♘g4 ♕f5 with an initiative for Black, and 14 g4!? ♗d3 15 ♗e3 ♗xf1 16 ♘e4 ♗xc4!? 17 ♘xf6+ ♘xf6 18 ♖c3 ♗xd5 with compensation for the queen) 14...♘f4 (14...♗d7!? Ivanchuk) and here the critical line is 15 b5! (15 ♘b5?! ♘xh3! was objectively good for Black in Ivanchuk-Ponomariov, Shenyang FIDE Wcup 2000, but White managed to win the game in the end; 15 h4 c6!? is unclear – the idea 16 dxc6 bxc6 17 c5 dxc5 18 ♗xa6 ♘g2+ 19 ♔e2 ♘xe3! 20 fxe3 ♖ad8 21 ♗c4+ ♔h8 22 ♕f1 cxb4 is given by Ponomariov) 15...♘c5 16 ♗xc5 dxc5 17 gxf4 exf4 18 ♕d2, as mentioned by all three annotators. Ponomariov opined that 18...♖fe8+ 19 ♔d1 a6 20 ♘g4 ♕h4, with the idea 21 ♕xf4 (I consider this move dubious) 21...axb5 22 cxb5 ♖f8 23 ♕g3 ♗xg4+ 24 ♕xg4 ♕xf2 25 d6 ♖f4 26 ♕e6+ ♔h8 27 ♔c1 ♖d4, preserves compensation with Black.

c2) 12...e4!? deserves attention: 13 ♘b5 (or 13 ♖b3 ♘xb4 with unclear play after, for example, 14 fxg6 hxg6 15 ♘xe4 ♘xa2 – Ivanchuk) 13...♗xf5 14 g4 (or: 14 ♗e3 c6; 14 ♘d4 ♗xd4! 15 ♕xd4 e3) 14...e3 15 gxf5 exf2+ 16 ♔xf2 ♕h4+ 17 ♔g1 ♖xf5 18 ♘f3 (18 ♘g4 ♖e8 19 ♗d2 ♘g3 20 ♔g2 ♘xh1 21 ♔xh1 h5 22 ♘h6+ ♗xh6 23 ♗xh6 ♔h7 with an attack) 18...♖xf3 (18...♕g3+ 19 ♗g2 ♖e8 20 ♗d2 ♘f4 21 ♗xf4 ♖xf4, with compensation according to Ivanchuk, is maybe not fully convincing after 22 h4!) 19 ♕xf3 ♖f8 20 ♕e3 ♗h6 (20...c6!?) 21 ♕e6+ ♖f7 22 ♕e8+ ♖f8 23 ♕e6+ with a draw – Ivanchuk.

We now return to the position after 8...♕e8 *(D)*.


W

9 ♗e2 ♘f4

After 9...f5?! 10 exf5 ♘f4 11 ♗xf4 exf4 12 fxg6 ♕xg6 Black is a tempo down in comparison with Kasparov's pawn sacrifice in the 7...♘a6 line. After 13 ♘f3!, 13...♕xg2?! is extremely risky due to 14 ♖g1 ♕xh3 15 ♕d4! (or 15 ♕d2!?; less clear is the sacrifice 15 ♖xg7+?! ♔xg7 16 ♕d4+ ♔g8 17 ♔d2 ♗f5 18 ♖g1+ ♗g6 19 ♘g5 {H.Leyva-R.Leyva, Holguin 1995} 19...♕f5!).

10 ♗f3 f5 11 ♘f1?!

This not very successful deviation from the main line was once tried by GM Krasenkow. The correct line is 11 g3! ♘xh3 12 ♗g2 f4 (12...fxe4 13 ♗e3 ♗f5 14 ♘g4 h5 15 ♗xh5 ♕d7?! 16 f3!) 13 ♘f3 g5 14 ♖xh3 (or 14 ♗xh3 g4 15 ♗g2 gxf3 16 ♕xf3 ♕g6 17 ♗h3, which comes to the same thing) 14...g4 15 ♘h4 gxf3 16 ♕xf3 ♕g6 17 ♗h3! and in this critical position it is not easy for Black to reach equality: 17...fxg3 (17...♗xh3 18 ♖xh3 ♘d7 19 ♔d2 a6 20 0-0-0!, Bagirov-Krakops, Riga 1996) 17...♘a6?! 18 ♗xc8 ♖axc8 19 gxf4 exf4 20 ♗d2, Vyzhmanavin-Chiburdanidze, Moscow Ch 1981) 18 ♕xg3 ♕xg3 19 fxg3 ♘a6. I once considered this to be playable for Black, but later decided that the simple 20 ♗e3!? ♘b4 21 ♔e2 ♘c2 22 ♗xc8 ♖axc8 23 ♖af1 ♘xe3 24 ♔xe3 is not really pleasant for him due to his bad bishop.

Therefore, 8...♘a6!? looks more promising for Black than 8...♕e8 as of now.

11...♘a6! 12 ♘g3

After 12 g3 Black sacrifices the knight by 12...♘c5! 13 gxf4 exf4 with a very strong initiative.

12...♘c5 13 0-0 ♘cd3

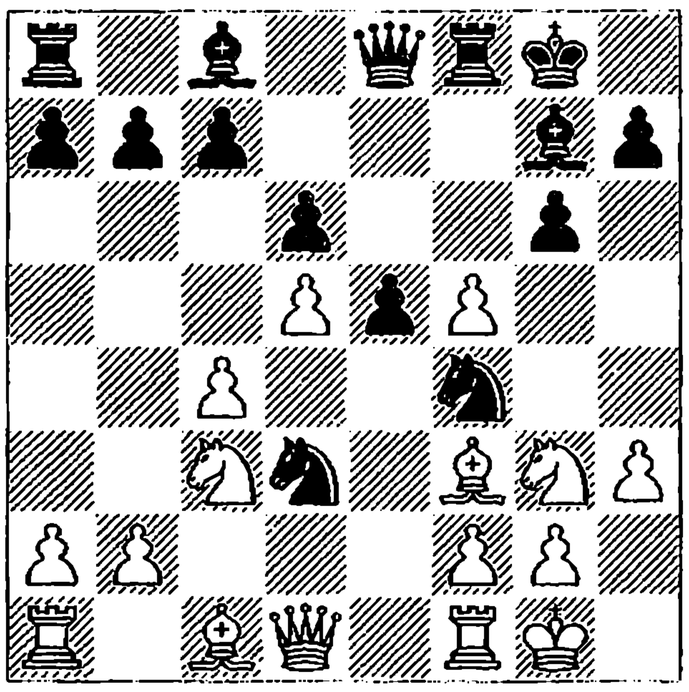
13...♘fd3!? 14 exf5 gxf5 15 ♘h5 f4 is also possible.

14 exf5 *(D)*

14...♘xc1!

This quite obvious move was suggested by Krasenkow in his *CBM* annotations to the game Krasenkow-Arakhamia, Hastings 1993/4 which continued 14...gxf5?! 15 ♘h5!. I was unaware of this game -- while my opponent (the author of the popular 'SOS' books and articles) as he told me, did not use the ChessBase data in his preparation.

B



15 f6 ♘cd3 16 fxg7 ♔xg7 17 ♖b1 ♕e7 18 ♗g4 ♗xg4 19 ♕xg4 h5 20 ♕d1 ♕h4 21 ♘ce2?

White overlooks his opponent's simple combination. 21 ♘ge4 is correct, when Black could play on by 21...♖f7!? (instead, 21...♘xh3+ 22 gxh3 ♘f4 23 f3! ♘xh3+ 24 ♔g2 ♘f4+ leads to a draw).

21...♘xf2!

Not 21...♘xe2+ 22 ♕xe2 ♘xf2? 23 ♕e3!, but 21...♕g5!? is also good.

22 ♖xf2 ♘xe2+ 23 ♕xe2

23 ♘xe2? ♕xf2+.

23...♕xg3

Black has a strong extra pawn on e5. The rest of the game was not too exciting.

24 ♖bf1 ♖xf2 25 ♖xf2 ♖f8 26 ♖xf8 ♔xf8 27 c5 dxc5 28 ♕b5 ♕e3+ 29 ♔h1 b6 30 ♕c6 ♕c1+ 31 ♔h2 ♕f4+ 32 ♔h1 ♕f7 33 d6 ♕f1+ 34 ♔h2 ♕f4+ 35 ♔h1 ♕c1+ 36 ♔h2 ♕f4+ 37 ♔h1 cxd6 38 ♕xd6+ ♔g7 39 ♕e7+ ♔h6 40 ♕xa7 ♕c1+ 41 ♔h2 ♕xb2 42 ♕e7 ♕d4 43 ♕f8+ ♔g5 44 g3? ♕b2+ 45 ♔h1 ♕a1+ 46 ♔h2 ♕xa2+ 47 ♔g1 ♕b1+ 48 ♔h2 ♕c2+ 49 ♔g1 ♕f5 50 ♕d8+ ♕f6 51 ♕d2+ ♔f5 52 ♕d5 ♕e7 0-1

Game 25
Golubev – Kochetkov
Nikolaev Z 1995

Maybe it was not strictly necessary to include this game, which I played with White. However, it is one of my most memorable wins: I played terribly badly in the Nikolaev Zonal 1995, and this victory in the last round, for which I received a special prize, improved my mood for a long time ahead. Also, I have not played too many King's Indians with ...c5 as Black, and the types of positions that arise certainly deserve to be discussed.

1 e4 g6 2 d4 ♗g7 3 c4

Sometimes, though not very often, I get the chance to play the white side of a King's Indian.

3...c5

3...d6 4 ♘c3 ♘f6 is the most direct transposition to the KI.

4 d5 d6 5 ♘c3 ♘f6 6 ♗d3 0-0 7 h3

In case of 7 ♘f3, Black has 7...♗g4.

7...a6

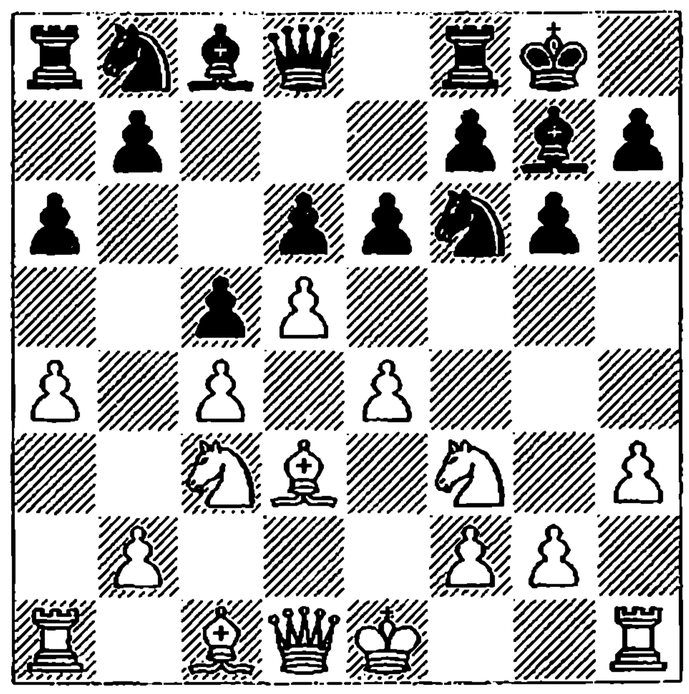
The immediate 7...e6 is more popular.

8 a4

A good alternative for White is 8 ♘f3 and after the consistent 8...b5, even 9 ♗g5!? (transposing to one of the subvariations of the 5 h3 + 6 ♗g5 line) is possible.

8...e6 9 ♘f3 *(D)*

B



In the King's Indian, this position can arise via a 1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 5 ♘f3 0-0 6 h3 c5 7 d5 a6 8 a4 e6 9 ♗d3 move-order.

9...exd5 10 exd5!?

The principal alternative 10 cxd5 transposes to a very important line of the Modern Benoni: 1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 c5 3 d5 e6 4 ♘c3 exd5 5 cxd5 d6 6 e4 g6 7 ♗d3 ♗g7 8 h3! 0-0 9 ♘f3 a6 10 a4!?.

Here I should note that while in a couple of non-Classical lines of the King's Indian a transition to a Benoni by ...c5 makes a lot of sense for Black, the Modern Benoni in its pure form has lost a major part of its attraction because of White's set-up with 7 ♗d3, 8 h3 and 9 ♘f3. So, it is not very wise for Black to give White the possibility to transpose to this position from the King's Indian. Some years ago I bought the interesting book by John Watson, *The Gambit Guide to the Modern Benoni*, and was surprised

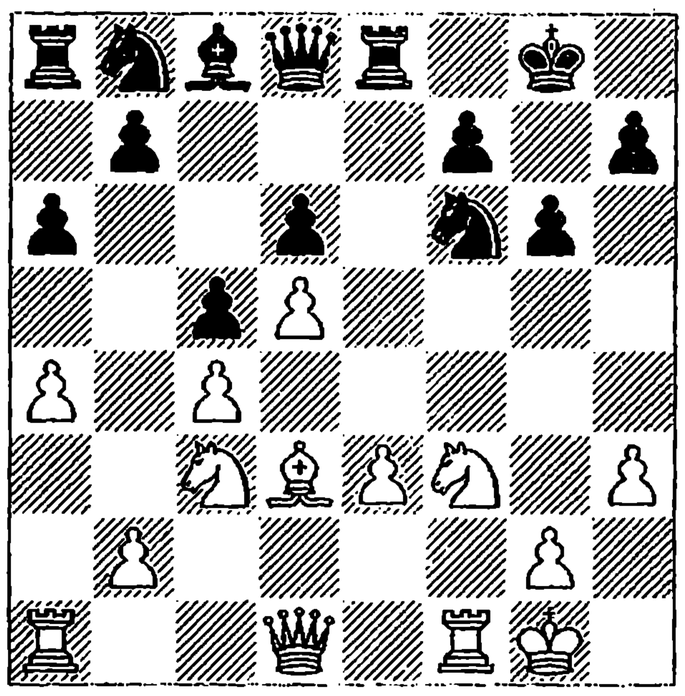
by his recommendation for Black of an early ...♘h5 in this critical line. To my taste, the positions after the typical response ♗g5 are not pleasant for Black. Still, this is only my view, and in any case Watson's book has many useful ideas for KI players.

10...♖e8+ 11 ♗e3! ♗h6 12 0-0!

A well-known standard reaction.

12...♗xe3 13 fxe3 *(D)*

B



13...♕e7

Accepting the pawn sacrifice by 13...♖xe3?! gives White an extremely strong attack after 14 ♕d2, when Black is obviously underdeveloped. Black should instead develop his pieces and play more slowly. On the whole, if Black manages to solve all his problems (place a knight firmly on e5, cover his vulnerable kingside and develop his queenside pieces) he might even be better. But in fact such goals are not achievable, and it is White who has some advantage. Most often Black starts to defend passively by ...♘g8 and ...f6 at some point. In this game, he tried to be more active...

14 e4 ♘bd7 15 ♕d2

15 e5?! is too optimistic: 15...dxe5 16 ♕d2 ♘h5.

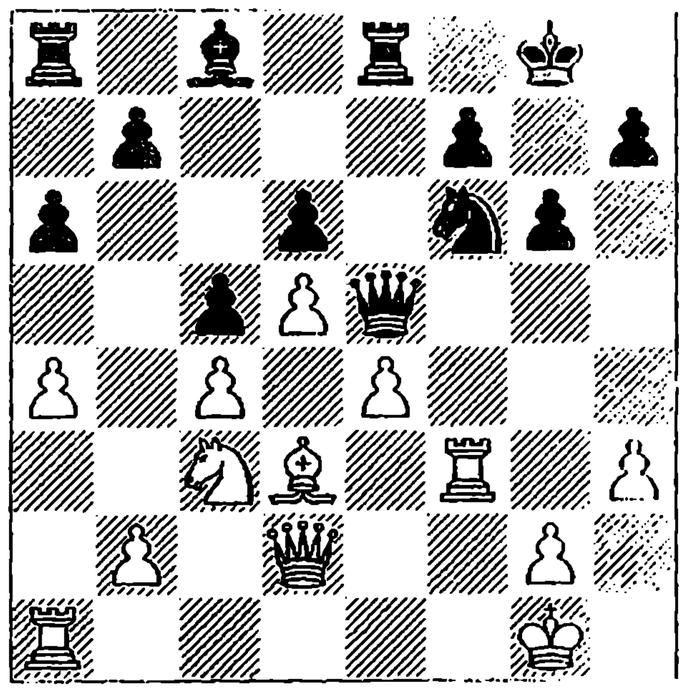
15...♘e5

15...♔g7!? is more cautious, transposing to some earlier games, which continued 16 ♖f2 ♘g8 (or 16...♖f8).

16 ♘xe5 ♕xe5 17 ♖f3!? *(D)*

17 ♕f2!? is a reasonable alternative for White: 17...♔g7 18 a5 (or 18 ♖ae1, when 18...♕e7? fails to 19 e5 dxe5 20 d6 ♕xd6 21 ♘e4 ♘xe4 22 ♕xf7+ ♔h6 23 ♕xe8 ♕xd3 24 ♕f8+) 18...♗d7 19 ♖ae1 ♖e7 20 ♖e3 ♖f8 21 ♖f3, as in S.Kostin-Eliseev, St Petersburg open 2004.

B



By this point I had already found the trap (i.e., the attack with 21 ♕h6) into which Black fell. From a practical point of view, it was highly useful that White played quickly at this stage. This helped my opponent to believe that it was I, and not he, who had overlooked something!

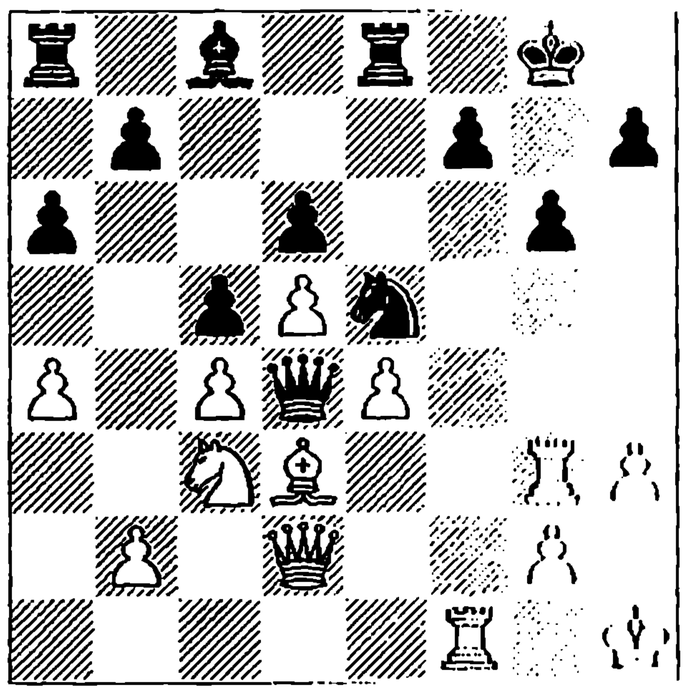
17...♘d7

Or 17...♕d4+ 18 ♔h1! (18 ♕f2?! ♘d7 with the idea 18...♘xe4? 19 ♕f4 ♗f5 20 ♕xe4 ♗xe4 21 ♕xf7+ ♔h8 22 ♖e1!.

18 ♖af1 ♕d4+ 19 ♔h1! ♘e5 20 ♖g3 *(D)*

Not 20 ♘e2?? ♘xf3.

B



20...♘xc4?

A logical continuation of Black's play and at the same time the decisive mistake. Necessary was 20...♘xd3 21 ♖xd3! and now

a) 21...♕xc4?! is too risky: 22 ♖d1 (less clear is 22 b3 ♕xb3 23 ♕f4 ♖f8 24 ♕xd6 b5 22...♕b4 (after 22...♖e5 23 ♖df3 ♕d1 White has a nice choice between 24 ♕e1 ♖e7 25 ♕xe5 26 ♖e4 and 24 ♕e1! b5 25 ♖xf7 ♔xf7 26 ♖c7, which is even stronger; 22...♕b3 25 ♖df3 is not suitable for Black either) 23 ♖df3 (less ambitious 23 ♖f6!? is also promising for White) 23...c4 24 e6 (after 24 ♖h1?! ♗f5 25 ♕e1

♖xe5! 26 ♕xh7+ ♔f8 27 ♕h8+!? ♔e7 28 ♕xa8 ♗xd3 29 ♖h8 ♕b6 30 ♔h2 White has the initiative for the pawn, but the outcome is not absolutely clear) 24...fxe6 25 ♖h4! ♗d7 26 ♕h6 ♖e7 27 ♖g3 ♗e8 28 ♖f3 followed by 29 ♘e4 with a decisive attack.

b) Black should try to defend the position after 21...♕e5, when White can continue 22 ♖df3!? f5 23 ♕g5!? with pressure.

21 ♕h6!

White's pieces are cooperating perfectly. His main threat now is 22 ♘e2 (winning a knight). Black has no satisfactory defence, because 21...♘e5 closes the way back for the queen to the kingside, and 21...♘xb2 removes the knight from the defence of the king.

21...♘xb2

Or 21...♘e5 22 ♘e2! ♕xb2 (22...♕xd3 23 ♖xd3 ♘xd3 24 ♕g5!? with a clear advantage) 23 ♘f4! ♘xd3 24 ♘xg6! (but not 24 ♘h5? f5! 25 exf5 ♗xf5 26 ♖xf5 ♕c1+ 27 ♕xc1 ♘xc1 28 ♘f6+ ♔g7 29 ♘xe8+ ♖xe8) 24...fxg6 25 ♖xg6+ hxg6 26 ♕xg6+ ♕g7 27 ♕xe8+ ♔h7 28 ♖f7! ♘e5 29 ♖xg7+ ♔xg7 30 ♕e7+ ♘f7 31 a5 c4 32 ♕c7 and White's queen dominates the board.

21...♕e5? (attacking the rook) loses immediately to 22 ♖gf3!.

22 e5! *(D)*

Certainly not 22 ♖xf7? ♔xf7 23 ♕xh7+ ♕g7 24 ♖f3+ ♗f5.

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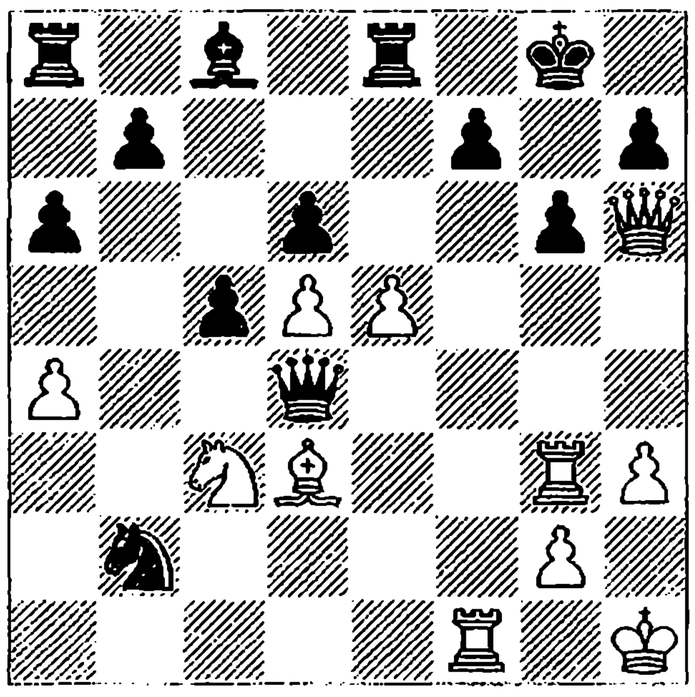

Now White opens all the lines around Black's king, and the fight quickly finishes.

22...♘xd3

Or: 22...♕xc3 23 ♗xg6!; 22...♕xe5 23 ♗xg6 (23 ♖xf7 wins as well) 23...fxg6 24 ♖xg6+ hxg6 25 ♕xg6+ ♔h8 26 ♖f7 ♕e1+ 27 ♔h2 ♕e5+ 28 g3 +– and the knight covers the e2-square from c3; 22...♗f5 (the most stubborn) 23 ♗xf5 ♖xe5 24 ♔h2! (preparing ♖f4; instead, the immediate 24 ♖f4?? would fail to 24...♖e1+ 25 ♔h2 ♕g1#) 24...♖e7 25 ♖f4! ♕g7 26 ♕h4 with a decisive advantage.

23 ♖xf7! ♘f2+

The main point of White's combination was 23...♔xf7 24 ♕xh7+ ♔f8 25 ♕h8+! ♔e7 26 ♕f6+ ♔d7 27 ♕xd6#.

24 ♔h2 1-0

There is really nothing to play for: 24...♘g4+ 25 hxg4 (or 25 ♖xg4 ♕xe5+ 26 ♖gf4 and Black is forced to give away his queen by 26...♕xf4+) 25...♔xf7 26 ♕xh7+ ♔f8 27 ♕h8+ ♔f7 28 ♕f6+ ♔g8 29 ♕xg6+ ♔f8 30 ♖f3+ and White mates.

Game 26
Suba – Golubev
Romanian Superliga (Herculane) 1996

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 5 h3 0-0 6 ♗g5 *(D)*

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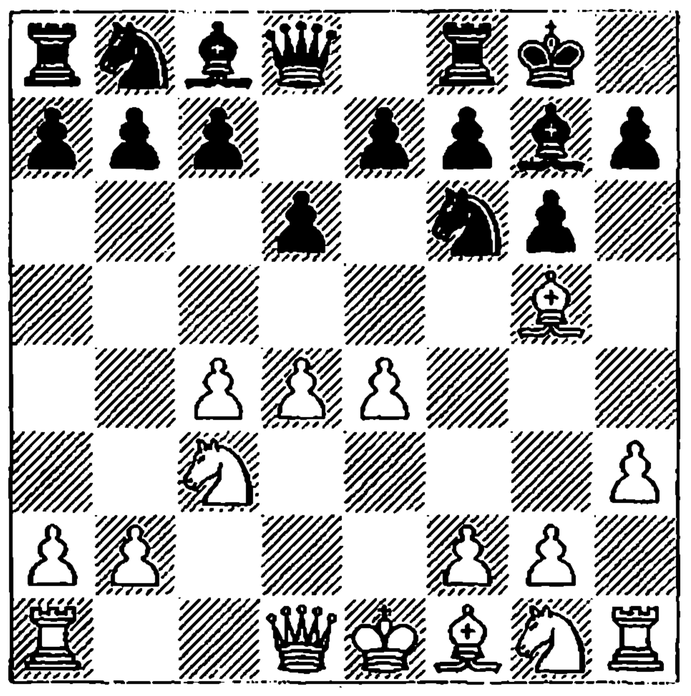


This line was introduced by Romanian GM Theodor Ghitescu around the end of the 1950s. His compatriot GM Mihai Suba became Ghitescu's most persistent follower. I have approximately 90 of Suba's games with this line in my KI database, but no doubt he has played it many more times than that. In the 1990s, many other GMs included the Romanian line in their repertoire. So, what is the idea behind White's setup, and what is the difference from the 5 ♘f3 & 6 h3 line, which was considered above? First of all, the immediate 6...e5? is a mistake in view of 7 dxe5! dxe5 8 ♕xd8 ♖xd8 9 ♘d5. Secondly, White preserves possibilities to develop his

kingside pieces not only by ♘f3, but also by ♗d3 & ♘ge2 or ♘ge2 & ♘g3. On the other hand, plans with ...c5 make more sense for Black now.

6...a6!?

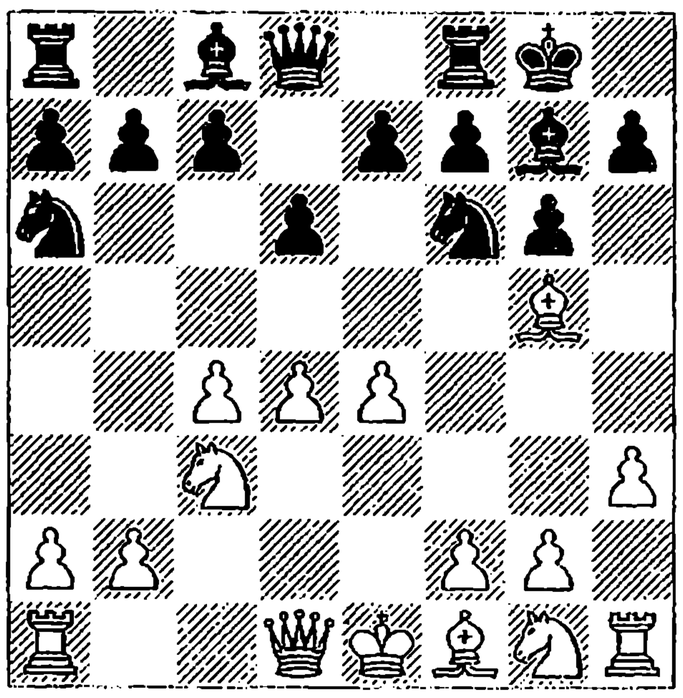
An interesting idea, successfully developed by Glek. Other options:

a) 6...c6 is another rare move which I tried in my next game against Suba – mainly in order to avoid positions that are very familiar to him. 7 ♘f3! (7 ♗d3 ♕b6!? 8 ♘a4 ♕a5+ 9 ♗d2 ♕c7 10 ♘f3 e5, Bareev-Kožul, Biel IZ 1993; 7 ♕d2 ♘bd7!?) 7...a6 8 ♗e2 (8 ♗d3 is also possible) 8...b5 9 0-0 (9 e5!?) 9...b4 10 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 11 ♘a4 ♘d7 12 c5! dxc5 13 e5!? (13 dxc5 ♘e5) 13...♗g7 14 e6 fxe6 15 ♘g5?! (15 dxc5! is correct, with compensation for the pawn) 15...♘b6! 16 ♘xb6 (16 ♘xc5 is unpleasantly met by 16...♕d5!) 16...♕xb6 17 ♗c4 cxd4 with good chances for Black, Suba-Golubev, Romanian Superliga (Predeal) 1997. On the whole, 6...c6 is playable, but does not promise full equality.

b) 6...h6 7 ♗e3 e5 8 d5 ♘a6 9 ♗d3 ♘c5 10 ♗c2 ♘h5?! (10...c6!?; 10...a5) 11 g3 a5 12 ♕d2 ♔h7 13 ♘ge2 ♗d7 14 g4 ♘f6 15 f3 (Ksieski-Golubev, Schwäbisch Gmünd open 1994) is an example of unsuccessful play by Black in this line: White has achieved all his strategic goals and stands clearly better.

c) 6...♘bd7 is not a critical reply either. Then 7 ♘f3 e5 8 d5 h6 9 ♗e3 ♘c5 10 ♘d2 transposes to 5 ♘f3 0-0 6 h3 e5 7 d5 ♘a6 8 ♗g5 ♘c5 9 ♘d2 h6 10 ♗e3.

d) 6...♘a6 *(D)* is quite popular.



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Now White must choose between three ways of developing his kingside:

d1) 7 ♘f3 transposes to 5 ♘f3 0-0 6 h3 ♘a6 7 ♗g5.

d2) 7 ♘ge2!? c6 (7...e5 8 d5 c6 as a rule transposes to the same positions after 9 ♕d2 or 9 g4) and now:

d21) 8 g4 e5 9 d5 cxd5 10 cxd5 ♗d7 (worse is 10...b5?! 11 ♘g3 b4 12 ♘a4! ♕a5 13 b3 ♗d7 14 ♘b2!, Atalik-Peng Zhaoqin, Wijk aan Zee 1997) 11 ♘g3 ♕b6 12 ♕d2 ♘c5 13 ♗e2 a5 14 0-0 ♖fc8 15 ♗e3 a4 16 ♖fc1 ♕a5 17 h3 b5 with reasonable chances for Black, Suba-Motylev, Romanian Superliga 2000.

d22) 8 ♕d2 e5 9 d5 cxd5 (9...♘c5 10 b4 a5!? 11 ♗e2 ♗d7 has also been tried) 10 cxd5 ♗d7 (10...♘c5 11 ♘g3 a5 12 ♗e2 a4 13 0-0 ♕a5 14 ♖fc1 ♗d7 15 f3 ♖fc8 16 ♘d1 ♕xd2 17 ♗xd2 h5 18 ♘f1 h4! 19 ♗g5 ♘h5 gave Black good counterplay in Suba-Nisipeanu, Romanian Superliga 1997; *generally, h3 in combination with f3 always creates a weakness on g3 and makes Black a bit happy*) 11 ♘g3 ♕a5 (11...♘c5!? has the idea 12 b4 ♘a4 13 ♘xa4 ♗xa4 14 b5 a6 15 bxa6 bxa6 16 ♗d3 ♕d7 17 0-0 h5! – Damljanović) 12 ♗e2 ♘c5 13 0-0 ♕b4!? (13...♕c7 Damljanović) 14 ♗c3 (14 a3 ♕b3!) 14...♖fc8! 15 f3 a5 16 0-0 (16 a3 ♕b3 17 ♗d1 ♕c4 18 ♗e2 ♕b3 19 ♗d1 ½-½ Agrest-Movsesian, Elista OL 1998 – played in round 13) 16...♕b6 17 ♖fc1 (17 b3? was refuted by the typical blow 17...♗h6! in Agrest-Damljanović, Elista OL 1998 – this was played in round 3) 17...♘e8 with unclear play – Damljanović.

d3) 7 ♗d3 e5 (7...♕e8!? makes quite a lot of sense, because after 8 g4 Black is not obliged to continue with 8...e5 and can try, for example, 8...♘d7!?) 8 d5 c6 (8...♕e8 9 g4 has given White good practical results; 9...♘c5 10 ♔h1 was Yermolinsky-Radjabov, Hyderabad (FIDE Wcup) 2002, and here 11 ♕f3! ♘ed7 12 ♗d2 ♘a6 13 ♘e2 is an untried suggestion by Huzman) 9 ♘ge2 ♘c5 (9...cxd5 10 ♘xd5!?) 10 ♔h1 11 0-0 (11 ♕d2 cxd5 12 exd5!? ♗d7 13 0-0 ♕b6, Bareev-Gelfand, Linares 1994, and 11 ♔h1!?, preparing f4, then 14...♖ae8 15 ♕e2 ♕a6 16 b3 b5 17 ♗xc5 dxc5 18 cxb5 ♘xb5 19 ♘xb5 ♕xb5 = Gelfand) 11...cxd5 12 cxd5 ♘xd5 ♘e6! 13 ♘xf6+ ♗xf6 14 ♗xf6 ♕xf6 15 ♕xd6 ♖a6 16 ♕a3 ♘f4! 17 ♘xf4 exf4 with compensation – Gelfand) 12...♗d7 13 a4! 11 ♔h1! (more solid than 14 g4!? ♕b6 15 ♔h1! A.Mikhalevski; the game Kasparov-Kramnik, Las Palmas 1996 continued 14 ♕d2 ♕b6 15

♖ab1 ♖fc8 16 ♘g3 ♕d8 17 ♗h6 ♗xh6 18 ♕xh6 ♕f8 19 ♕e3 ♗e8 ½-½) 14...♕b6 15 ♖b1 with some advantage for White, Dreev-A.Fedorov, Russian Cht (Maikop) 1998.

e) Most often Black plays 6...c5 7 d5 e6 8 ♗d3 exd5 *(D)*.

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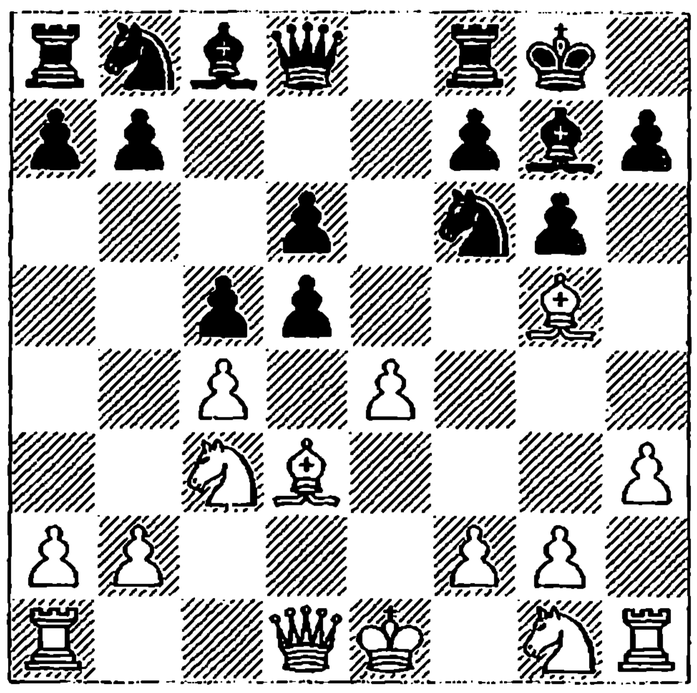

9 cxd5 (there is also Suba's favourite move 9 exd5!?, when Black plays 9...♖e8+ 10 ♘ge2 h6, taking some space before White has played ♕d2 – or 9...♘bd7). In this position Black has many possibilities. I shall mention only the interesting and almost unknown 9...♗d7!? (planning ...b5) 10 a4 (10 ♕d2?! b5 11 ♗xb5 ♗xb5 12 ♘xb5 ♕b6 13 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 14 ♘c3 ♗xc3 15 ♕xc3 ♖e8 with full compensation, Olarasu-Nevednichy, Agneaux St Lo open 1999 – a game between spouses) 10...♘a6! 11 ♘f3 ♘b4 12 ♗e2 h6 13 ♗f4 (the most ambitious, but probably not the most successful retreat for that bishop) 13...♕e7 (in my notes for *Chess Today* I suggested that 13...♖e8! 14 ♘d2 ♗f5! 15 f3 ♘h5 16 ♗h2 ♕h4+ 17 ♔f1 ♗d7 18 ♗xd6 ♖e5!? could be even stronger) 14 ♘d2 ♖fe8 (here 14...♗f5 15 0-0!? ♘xe4 16 ♘dxe4 ♗xe4 17 ♘xe4 ♕xe4 18 ♗xd6 is not dangerous for White) 15 0-0?! (15 ♗e3!?; 15 ♗h2 b5!? and now 16 0-0! with unclear play, but not 16 axb5? ♘fxd5 17 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 18 exd5 ♗xb5 –+) 15...♘fxd5! 16 exd5 ♗xc3 17 bxc3 ♘xd5 18 ♗e3 ♘xc3 19 ♕e1 d5 and Black had more than sufficient compensation for the piece in Åkesson-Jobava, Antalya Ech 2004.

f) One more (and very interesting) possibility is the immediate 6...♕e8!?, used as Black by an expert in this line, Beliavsky. The main idea is 7 ♗d3 e5 8 d5 ♘h5 followed by ...f5. Black has achieved very decent results here.

7 ♘f3

After 7 ♗d3 c5 8 d5 b5, White should play 9 ♘f3!, transposing to a position that will be considered in the note to White's 8th (but not 9 cxb5? axb5 10 ♘xb5 ♘xe4 11 ♗xe4 ♕a5+ 12 ♘c3 ♗xc3+ 13 bxc3 ♕xc3+ – Glek).

After 7 a4, Black's best option is probably 7...♘bd7! (another possible line is 7...c6 8 ♘f3 a5 9 ♗e2 ♘a6 10 0-0 e5 11 d5 ♘c5 12 ♘d2 h6!? 13 ♗e3 ♘fd7) 8 ♘f3 e5 9 d5 a5 10 ♗d3 h6 with good counterplay after 11 ♗h4 (or 11 ♗e3 ♘h5) 11...g5 12 ♗g3 ♘h5 13 ♗h2 ♘f4.

7...c5 *(D)*

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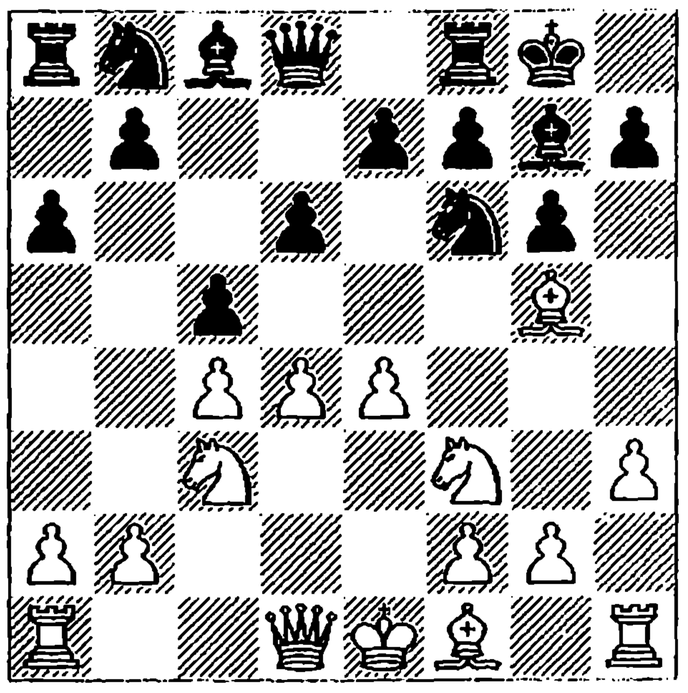

8 dxc5

8 ♕d2?! cxd4 9 ♘xd4 ♘c6 is a poor version for White of a Maroczy Bind. After 10 ♘xc6 bxc6 11 ♗e2 ♖b8 12 0-0 ♘d7 13 ♖ab1 ♘c5 14 ♗h6 ♗xh6 15 ♕xh6 f5! 16 ♗f3 f4 Black was already better in Ksieski-Golubev, German Team Cup 2001/2.

An important line is 8 d5!? b5 9 ♗d3! (9 cxb5?! axb5 10 ♗xb5 ♘xe4!), when Black must decide between several options:

a) 9...b4!? 10 ♘e2 h6 11 ♗e3 e5!? – Hazai.

b) 9...♘bd7 10 0-0 ♖b8!? 11 cxb5 axb5 12 ♗xb5 h6 (12...♘xe4?! 13 ♘xe4 ♖xb5 14 ♘xd6 ♖xb2 15 ♘xc8 ♕xc8 16 ♗xe7; 12...♖xb5 13 ♘xb5 ♘xe4 14 ♘a7 ♘xg5 15 ♘xg5 ♗b7) 13 ♗xf6 ♘xf6 14 a4 ♘e8 was analysed briefly by Ponomariov and me: we thought that it might be playable for Black.

c) 9...h6 10 ♗e3 e6 was tried several times, and also makes sense.

d) 9...bxc4 10 ♗xc4 a5!? (10...♘bd7 11 0-0 ♖b8 12 b3 ♘e8 13 ♖c1 ♘c7 14 ♕e2 ♘b6 15 ♖fd1 ♘xc4 16 bxc4! favoured White in Yermolinsky-Piket, Wijk aan Zee 1997) 11 0-0 ♗a6 12 ♗xa6 ♘xa6 13 ♖e1 ♘d7 soon resulted in a draw in Agrest-Glek, Porto San Giorgio

open 2000. It looks like Black has acceptable play here.

8...♕a5 *(D)*

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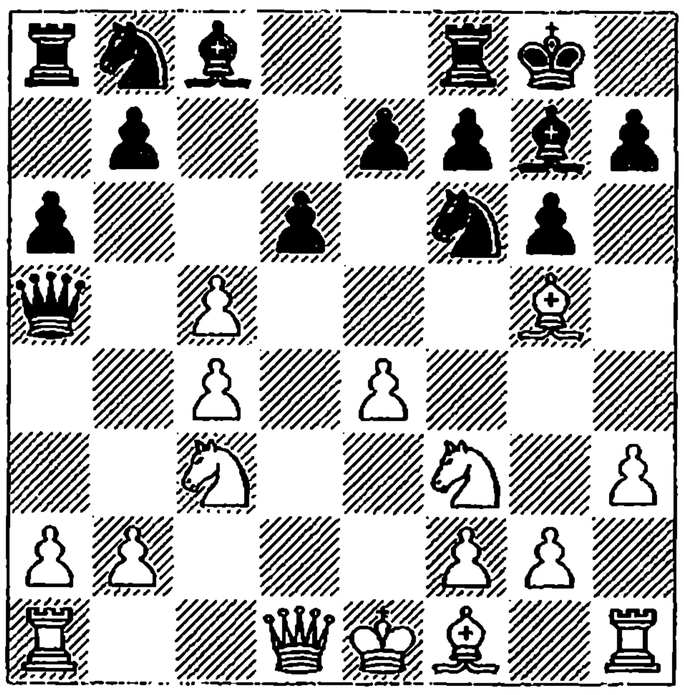

9 ♘d2

9 ♗d3 is also of interest: 9...dxc5 10 0-0 ♘c6 (planning 11...♘d7) 11 e5 ♘d7 12 e6! fxe6 13 ♕e2 (Hillarp Persson-Radjabov, Benidorm rpd 2003) and now maybe 13...♘f6!?.

One more possibility is 9 ♗d2 dxc5!? 10 e5 (better is 10 ♗e2 ♘c6 11 0-0 ♘d7 intending ...♕d8 followed by ...♘de5 = Glek) 10...♘fd7 (10...♘e8!?) 11 e6 fxe6 12 ♗e2 (12 h4!? Glek) 12...♘c6 13 0-0 ♕c7 14 ♘g5 ♘f6 15 ♖e1 ♘d4 with an edge for Black, Gheorghiu-Glek, Martigny open 1995.

9...dxc5 *(D)*

9...♕xc5 10 ♗e3 ♕c7!? is also playable: 11 ♖c1 e6 12 ♗e2 b6 13 0-0 ♗b7 14 f4 ♘bd7 15 b4 ♖ac8 16 g4?! h6 17 ♕e1 ♕b8 18 ♕f2 ♗a8 19 a3 ♘h7 and in Suba-Itkis, Romania 1996 Black obtained quite a good version of a Hedgehog.

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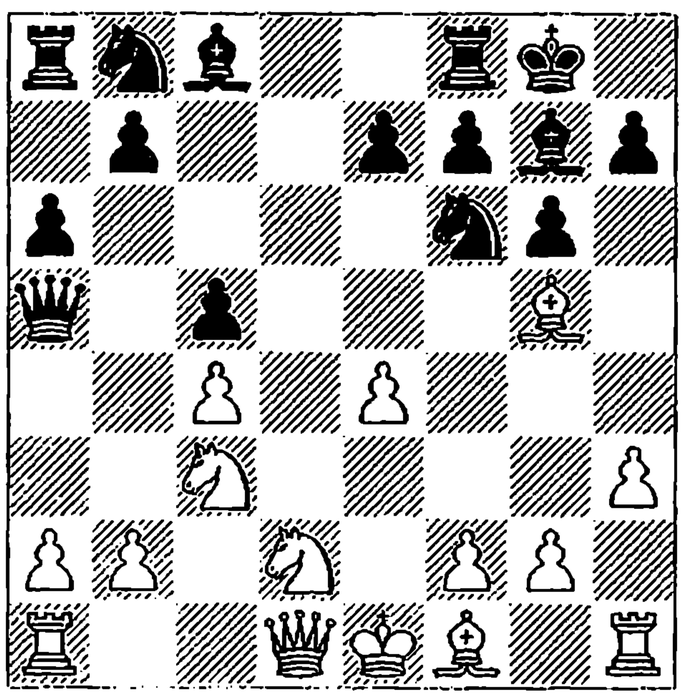

10 f4?!

An over-optimistic advance.

10 ♘b3 ♕c7 11 ♗e2 b6 12 0-0 ♗b7 13 ♕c2 e6! 14 f4 ♘c6 15 e5 ♘b4! 16 ♕b1 ♘e8 17 ♗f3 f6! occurred in Sotnikov-Glek, Russian Ch (Elista) 1995.

More to the point is 10 ♗e2! ♕c7 (also possible is 10...♘c6!?) 11 0-0 e6 (11...♘c6!?) 12 f4 ♘c6 13 e5 ♘e8 14 ♘de4 ♘d4 15 ♗d3 f5 16 exf6 ♘xf6 17 ♘xf6+ ♗xf6 18 ♗xf6 ♖xf6. This occurred in Suba-Sutovsky, Vendrell open 1996, where Black experienced problems: 19 ♕c1 ♗d7 20 ♘e4 ♖f7 21 ♕h4 ♘f5 22 ♕f2 b6 23 ♘g5 ♖f6 24 ♖ae1 ♖af8 25 ♗xf5 ♖xf5 26 ♕h4 ♗c8 27 ♘xe6 ♗xe6 28 ♖xe6 ♖xf4 29 ♕xf4 ♕xf4 30 ♕xf4 ♖xf4 31 ♖xb6 (31 b3!? b5 with the idea 32 ♖xa6?! bxc4 33 ♖a4 cxb3 34 ♖xb4 b2 35 ♖f1 c4) 31...♖xc4 32 ♖xa6 ♖c1+ 33 ♔h2 c4 34 ♖a7? (blundering a pawn away) 34...♖b1 ½-½.

10...♘c6 11 ♗e2

11 ♘b3 ♕c7 12 e5 ♘xe5! 13 ♗xf6 (13 fxe5? ♕xe5+) 13...♗xf6 14 ♘d5 ♗h4+ and Black is attacking. On 11 e5 ♘d7 12 ♘b3, I planned to reply 12...♕d8!? with the idea 13...f6.

11...♖d8 12 0-0

12 e5 ♘e8! also looks good for Black.

12...♘xe4! 13 ♘cxe4 *(D)*

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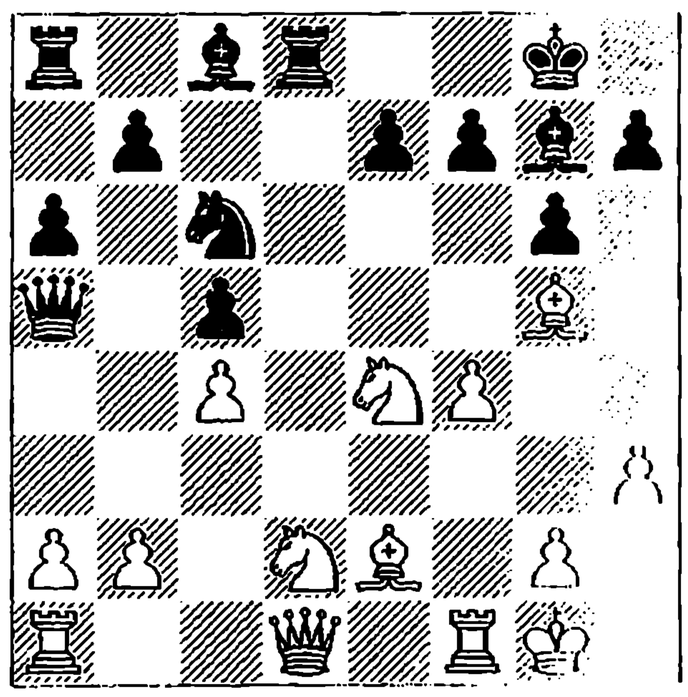


13...f5

Black had other possibilities, but my choice here was probably correct. Black will regain the piece, obtaining a promising position.

14 ♕c1

Perhaps 14 ♘c3 should have been preferred. After 14...♗xc3 15 bxc3 ♕xc3 16 ♖b1 ♕c4 17 ♕e1 ♘d4!? Black is the stronger side, but White can hope to escape in an endgame with opposite-coloured bishops.

14...fxe4 15 ♘xe4 ♘d4

15...♗f5!? is another way to develop the initiative, with the idea 16 ♘g3? ♕d3!

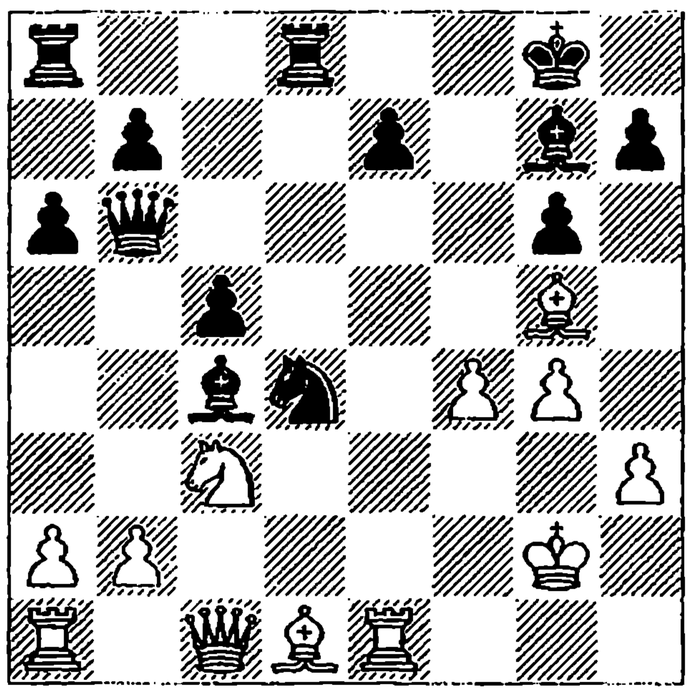
16 ♖e1 ♘f5

Creating the threat of 17...h6, and thereby practically forcing White's next. 16...♗f5 is less strong in view of 17 ♘g3!.

17 g4 ♘d4 18 ♘c3 ♗e6 19 ♔g2 ♕b6 20 ♗d1

Perhaps giving a pawn away was not the best solution for White. But his position would have been unpleasant in any case.

20...♗xc4 *(D)*



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Black has a huge advantage, but I was already in some time-trouble by this point. Therefore, my further play was not very confident, even if Black was always better along the way.

21 ♔g3 ♕c6 22 ♘e4 b5 23 ♕e3 ♖a7

23...♘f5+ 24 gxf5 ♖d3 25 ♕xd3 ♗xd3 26 ♗f3! is not so clear.

24 ♖c1 h6 25 ♗h4 ♖f8

Perhaps a small inaccuracy. An alternative is 25...g5!? 26 fxg5 ♘e6 with an attack.

26 b3! e5

There is also no direct win after 26...g5 27 ♔h2!.

27 ♔h2! exf4 28 ♕f2 ♗d5 29 ♖xc5 ♕a8! 30 ♘f6+ ♖xf6

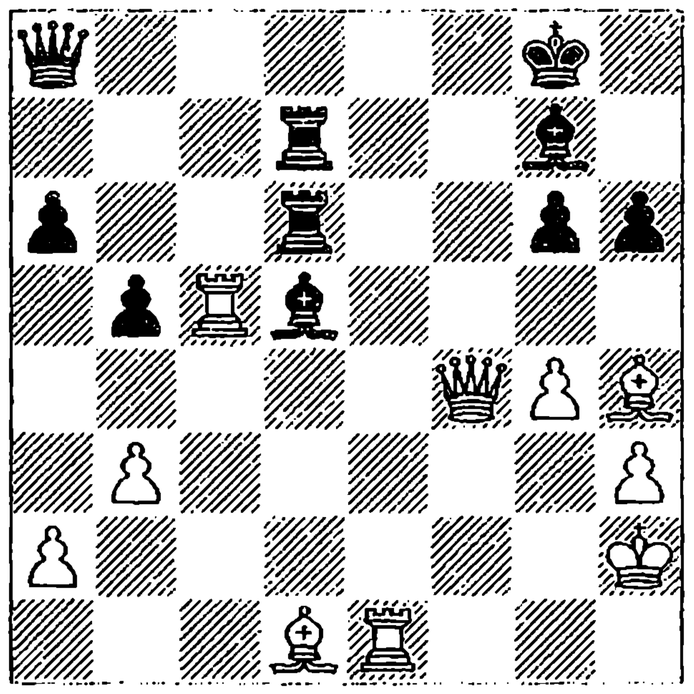
30...♗xf6!? 31 ♗xf6 ♘e6 deserved attention, but in time-trouble the side with the advantage generally tries to avoid chaos.

31 ♕xd4 ♖d6 32 ♕xf4 ♖ad7 *(D)*

White has regained the pawn and now is 'only' strategically worse.

33 ♗g3? ♗b7?

The forced win by 33...♗h1! 34 ♖xh1 ♖d2+ 35 ♗f2 ♗f8! 36 ♖e5 ♗d6! is not at all obvious, and I missed it even in my notes for *Informator*.



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34 ♗e2

34 ♕xd6?! ♖xd6 35 ♗xd6 ♕d8!? and Black should win.

34...♖d2 35 ♕e3 ♔h7 36 ♖c7 ♕d8 37 ♖xd7 ♕xd7 38 h4 ♕c6

38...♕d5 39 ♕f2 ♗d4 40 ♕f1 ♕f3?! does not win at once because White has the reply 41 ♔h3.

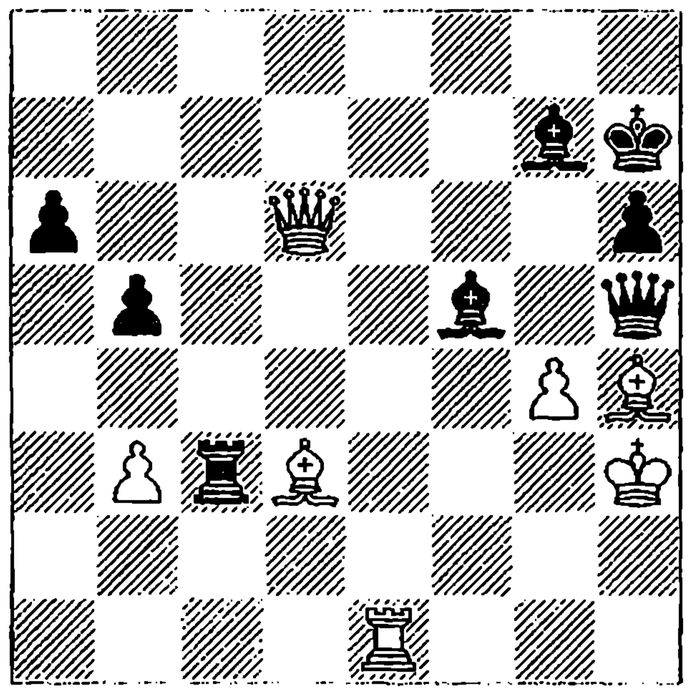
39 ♕f2 ♖xa2 40 h5 ♕e4 41 hxg6+ ♕xg6 42 ♔h3?!

42 ♖d1 was more stubborn.

42...♗c8! 43 ♕c5 ♖c2! 44 ♕d6 ♕h5+ 45 ♗h4 ♖c3+!

After 45...♗xg4+!? 46 ♗xg4 ♖c3+ 47 ♕g3 ♖xg3+ 48 ♔xg3 ♕d5 49 ♔f4 Black still must work a bit to achieve victory.

46 ♗d3+ ♗f5! *(D)*



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A picturesque position – more from Black's viewpoint than White's, of course!

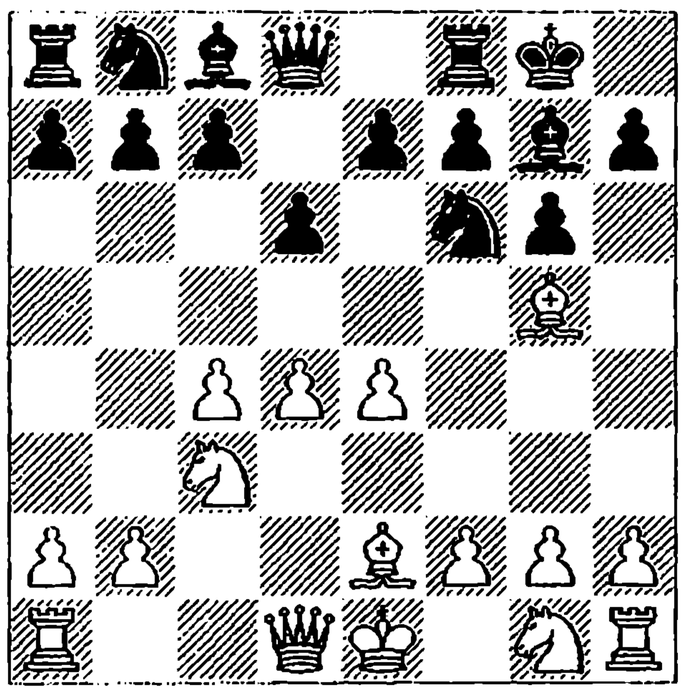
47 gxf5

Or 47 ♖g1 ♕g6.

47...♕xf5+ 0-1

7 The Averbakh Variation and Related Lines

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 5 ♗e2 0-0 6 ♗g5 *(D)*



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In certain periods, especially in the 1970s and 1980s, the Averbakh Variation was one of White's most important weapons against the King's Indian. While its popularity never quite matched that of the Classical, a large amount of theoretical material accumulated. Nowadays, the Averbakh does not look especially dangerous for Black in practice and, in my view, does not pose any real threat to the King's Indian from a theoretical viewpoint either. The story of the system's decreasing importance was quite simple: for a long time 6...c5 was considered to be Black's most principled answer, until in 1988 Glek introduced an absolutely new idea: the flexible (in comparison with ...♘bd7) 6...♘a6!?, which quickly proved to be fully playable. It was really too much for White, whose successes after 6...c5 were also rather mixed. Thus, many players started to look for other systems. (Rather comically, Glek, who essentially does not like to make the most popular moves, almost completely switched from his own 6...♘a6 to 6...c5 by the end of the 1990s.)

Nevertheless, the Averbakh must be taken seriously if it is to be faced with confidence. Let us first identify White's main strategic idea that lies behind these two bishops moves. The most basic idea is not too deep: 5 ♗e2 is a normal developing move, and 6 ♗g5 is aimed at preventing 6...e5?, which loses material after 7 dxe5 dxe5 8 ♕xd8 ♖xd8 9 ♘d5.

The main disadvantage of the system for White is that if Black responds well, it is not always easy for White to develop his forces with maximum harmony. Thus, ♘f3 in conjunction with ♗g5 is most suitable in old lines with ...♘bd7 (or an early ...c6) but often fails to impress in other cases. It is noteworthy that the transfer of the e2-bishop to c2 (via d1 or d3) followed by ♘ge2 is quite an important idea for White in many lines where Black plays ...e5.

Black has four main moves after 6 ♗g5. I feel that I can recommend both 6...c5 and 6...♘a6. I shall speak only very briefly about two other popular moves, 6...h6 and 6...♘bd7.

Game 27

Bareev – Golubev

USSR jr-Wch qual (Klaipeda) 1985

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 5 ♗e2 0-0 6 ♗g5 c5

In the beginning and middle of the 1980s I often used this way to meet the Averbakh.

7 d5 *(D)*

White can also try to fight for a small advantage by the significantly less popular 7 dxc5 ♕a5 8 ♗d2 (but not 8 ♕d2?! dxc5 and then, for example, 9 e5 ♖d8 10 ♕e3 ♘g4 11 ♗xg4 ♗xg4 12 ♗xe7 ♖e8 13 ♕xc5 ♕xc5 14 ♗xc5 ♘d7! with an advantage for Black, Osnos-Shianovsky, Tallinn 1959). Here Glek has preferred 8...dxc5!? (avoiding the main line 8...♕xc5 9 ♘f3 ♗g4 10 ♗e3 ♕a5 11 0-0 ♘c6) 9 e5 ♘fd7 10 f4 ♘c6, which is certainly worth a look.

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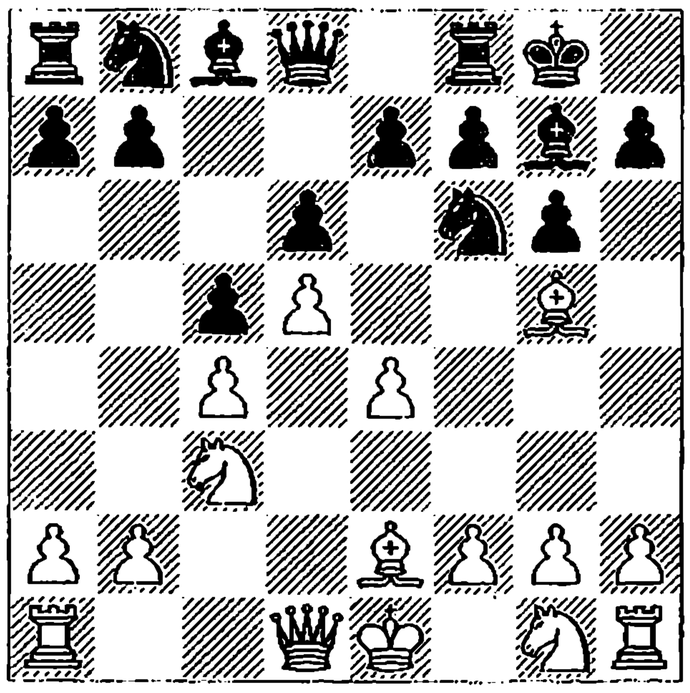


7...h6

Another well-known continuation is the solid 7...e6, when after 8 ♕d2 exd5 9 exd5 ♖e8 10 ♘f3 ♗g4 11 0-0 ♘bd7 12 h3 ♗xf3 13 ♗xf3 a6 14 a4 White has a minimal advantage. On the other hand, 7...b5?! 8 cxb5 a6 cannot be called solid at all. This pawn sacrifice occurred in two Kasparov games – incidentally, both were won by Black, but the theoretical assessment of the line is favourable for White. 9 a4! h6 (after 9...♕a5 the bishop, very importantly, retreats to defend the queenside by 10 ♗d2!, and then 10...♘bd7?! 11 ♖a3 was clearly better for White in Kasparov-Spassky, Tilburg 1981) 10 ♗d2 e6 11 dxe6 ♗xe6 12 ♘f3 axb5 13 ♗xb5 ♘a6 14 0-0 ♘c7 15 ♖e1 ♘xb5 16 ♘xb5 d5 17 exd5 ♘xd5 18 ♘e5 ♖e8 and Black's compensation for the pawn is not fully sufficient, even if his practical chances should not be underestimated, Tukmakov-Kasparov, USSR Ch (Frunze) 1981.

8 ♗f4!

This is more critical than 8 ♗e3 e6. Then:

a) 9 ♕d2 exd5 10 exd5 ♔h7! (Podgaets-Bronstein, Tbilisi 1973 saw 10...♘g4 11 ♗xg4 ♗xg4 12 ♗xh6 ♖e8+ 13 ♔f1 ♗xh6 14 ♕xh6 ♘d7 15 ♕f4 ♘e5 16 h4 b5!? 17 cxb5 ♗f5 18 ♘ge2 ♘d3 19 ♕d2 c4 20 ♘d4 ♕f6 21 ♘c6 ♗g4! 22 f3 ♗xf3 23 ♔g1 ♗e2! – an example of creative King's Indian play for Black, but perhaps the pawn sacrifice is not entirely correct) 11 h3 ♖e8 with equality.

b) The rare 9 ♘f3!? exd5 10 cxd5 was twice used by Korchnoi in recent years. I shall hazard a recommendation of 10...♘g4!?, planning ...f5 or ...♖e8.

c) 9 dxe6 ♗xe6 10 ♕d2 and here:

c1) 10...♕a5?! is not good: 11 ♗xh6 ♗xh6 12 ♕xh6 ♘xe4 13 ♖c1 ♖e8?! (even the superior 13...d5 14 cxd5 ♗xd5 15 ♘h3 or, as twice occurred in Uhlmann's games, 13...♘c6 14 h4 ♘d4 15 ♔f1! does not solve Black's problems) 14 h4! ♗g4?! (14...♘xc3 is a better try) 15 h5 g6 16 ♗xg4 ♘xc3+ 17 ♔f1 ♘e4 18 ♘f3 ♘d2+ 19 ♔g1 ♘xf3+ 20 gxf3 and White was winning in Bichnevich-Golubev, Odessa Ch 1983/4.

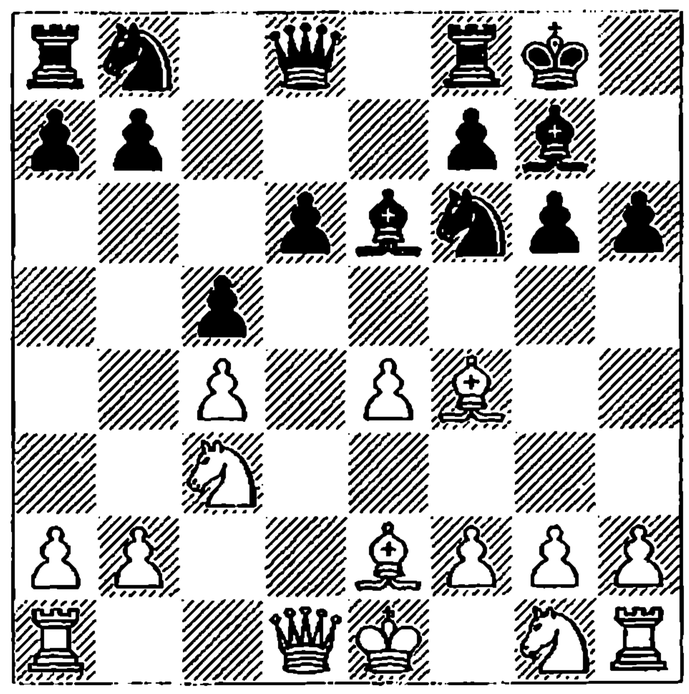
c2) 10...♕b6!? 11 ♗xh6 transposes to an important variation from the 8 ♗f4 line.

c3) As the d6-pawn is not yet attacked, Black can simply play 10...♔h7!. After 11 h3 ♘c6 12 ♘f3 ♕a5 13 ♖d1 (avoiding 13 0-0 ♘d4!) 13...♘d7 14 ♕xd6 ♖ad8 15 0-0 ♕b4 16 ♖b1 ♖fe8 17 a3 ♕b3 18 ♕g3 ♘d4 he solved all his problems in Portisch-Nunn, Brussels (World Cup) 1988.

One more retreat, 8 ♗h4, is unpopular and even considered to be suspect for White, because Black's ideas with ...b5 tend to work much better when White is not able to use his dark-squared bishop on the queenside. For instance, 8...b5!? 9 cxb5 a6 or 8...a6 9 ♘f3 (9 a4 ♕a5) 9...b5.

8...e6 9 dxe6 ♗xe6 *(D)*

W



White now faces an important decision.

10 ♗xd6

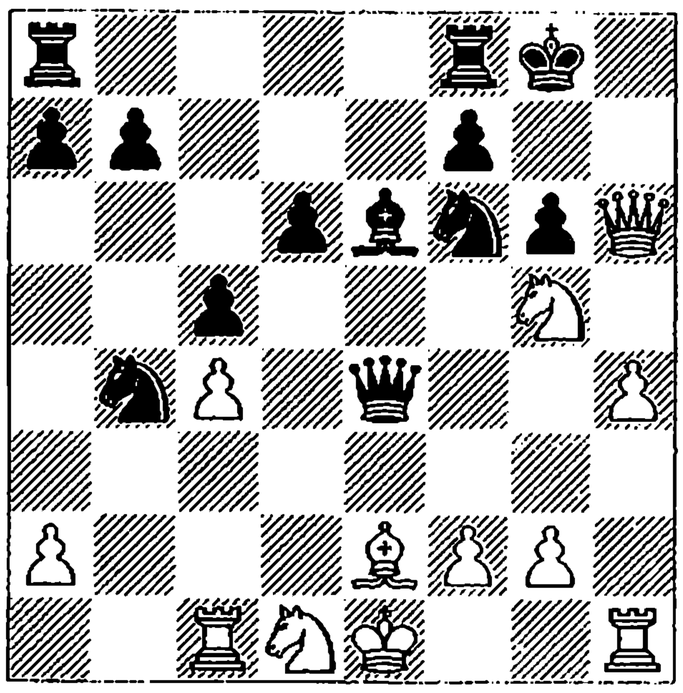
Capturing the pawn looks critical, but 10 ♕d2!? is another important option, and poses significant problems for Black. After 10...♕b6 (10...♔h7?! is hardly suitable for Black here: 11 ♗xd6 ♖e8 12 e5 ♘fd7 13 f4 f6 14 h4! fxe5 15 h5!, Bareev-Akopian, Moscow GMA 1990) 11 ♗xh6 ♗xh6 12 ♕xh6 ♕xb2 13 ♖c1 ♘c6 14 h4 there arises an exceedingly complicated position. The objective assessment remains a mystery, but the practical risk for Black is high as his king can easily come under a crushing attack. Therefore it is not surprising that Black's practical results in this line so far have been

rather disastrous. Let's nevertheless look at some concrete lines:

a) 14...♘e5 is a popular move, which is strongly met by 15 ♘h3! and if 15...b5!? (or 15...♖fe8 16 0-0! ♗xh3 17 gxh3 ♖e6 18 ♕e3) then White's best is probably 16 h5!, as in Bellmann-Krebs, German corr. Ch 1999.

b) I would suggest for Black 14...♘b4!? 15 ♘d1 (not 15 h5?? ♘g4 16 ♕f4 ♘xf2!; White can play 15 ♕d2!? ♕xd2+ 16 ♔xd2 but the games played so far have not shown any superiority for White in this endgame) 15...♕d4! 16 ♘f3 ♕xe4 17 ♘g5 *(D)* and now:

B



b1) 17...♕f4? is easily refuted by 18 h5! ♕xc1 19 hxg6.

b2) 17...♘d3+?! 18 ♔f1 ♕f4 does not seem to be sufficient after 19 ♖c2! (avoiding the trap 19 h5? ♘xf2!! 20 g3 ♘xh1+ 21 gxf4 ♘g3+ 22 ♔f2 ♘f5) 19...♘e5 (19...♗g4 20 g3 ♗xe2+ 21 ♖xe2 ♕c1 22 ♔g2 ♕xc4 23 ♘e3 also favours White, while 19...♗f5 20 h5 ♘e5 just transposes to 19...♘e5) 20 h5 ♗f5 (or: 20...♖fe8 21 g3 ♕d4 22 ♘e3!?; 20...♗g4? 21 g3 ♕d4 22 hxg6 +–) 21 hxg6 (but not 21 ♘xf7? g5!) 21...♘xg6 22 g3 ♕d4 (if 22...♕e5, then 23 ♘e3! ♗xc2 24 ♘xc2 with a decisive advantage) 23 ♘f3! ♕e4 24 ♘c3 (24 ♘e3!? is also good) 24...♕xc2 25 ♘d5 ♕xe2+ 26 ♔xe2 ♖fe8+ 27 ♔d2 ♘xd5 28 cxd5 ♗e4 29 ♘h4! ♗xh1 30 ♘f5 and White wins.

b3) Strongest is 17...♕e5! (threatening to play 18...♘d3+) 18 ♘e3, when it seems that both of Black's main options in this crazy position are playable:

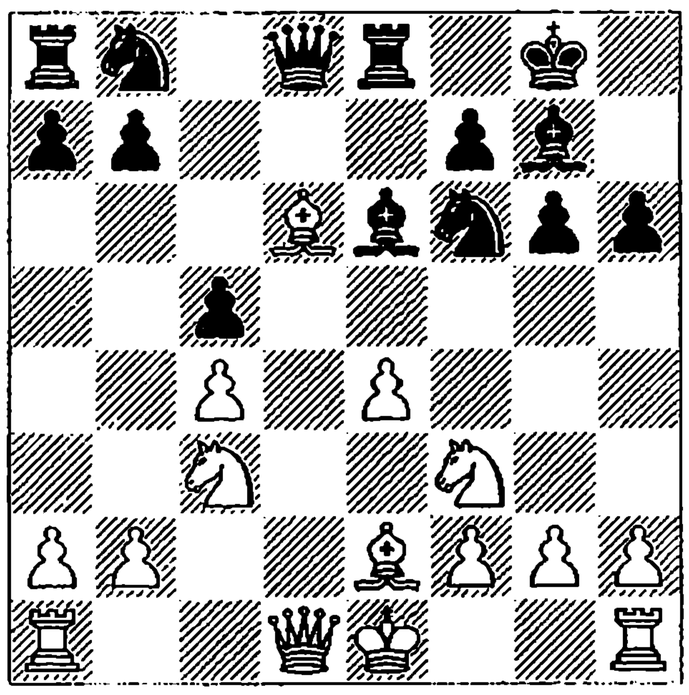
b31) 18...♖fe8 19 h5 ♘xh5 (it is too late for 19...♕b2?, which loses to 20 hxg6 ♕xc1+ 21 ♘d1) 20 a3!? (White could force a draw by 20 ♖xh5 gxh5 21 ♘h7 ♕g7 22 ♘f6+ ♔f8 23 ♘h7+) 20...♕b2! 21 0-0 (21 ♖d1 ♘c2+!) and in the game Khalifman-V.Babula, Bundesliga 2000/1 Black could have played 21...♕xe2!, after which I do not see how White can get any meaningful advantage.

b32) The alternative for Black is the immediate 18...♕b2!? 19 ♖d1 ♖ae8 (this is a bit counter-intuitive, but the line 19...♖fe8 20 h5! with the idea 20...♗xc4 21 0-0!! ♕xe2 22 hxg6 ♕h5 23 gxf7+ ♗xf7 24 ♕xf6 illustrates the reason for keeping the rook on f8; one more possibility is 19...♘c2+ 20 ♘xc2 ♕xc2 21 ♘xc6 fxe6 but I am not sure that Black can gain full equality in this way), and here 20 h5 (alternatively, 20 ♔f1 ♗f5! 21 h5 ♖xe3 22 fxe3 ♗d3!) 20...♗xc4! seems to work well for Black.

As usual, I must insert a disclaimer at this point. I have tried to do my best, but chess is complicated – please check the lines and decide for yourself whether to try this line in your own games!

10...♖e8 11 ♘f3 *(D)*

B



11...♕b6!

Another well-known possibility is 11...♘c6, which after the almost forced 12 0-0 ♘d4 13 e5 ♘d7 14 ♘xd4 cxd4 15 ♕xd4 ♘xe5 16 ♗xe5 ♕xd4 17 ♗xd4 ♗xd4 18 ♖ac1 ♖ad8 19 b3 ♗xc3 20 ♖xc3 ♖d2 21 ♗f3 ♖xa2 22 ♗xb7 ♖b8 results in an endgame where Black, who is a pawn down, has good chances for a draw. 23 ♗e4 (23 ♗f3 ♖a3 24 ♗d1 a5 25 ♖c1 ♖c8 26 ♖e1 a4 27 bxa4 ♖xc4 28 ♖xc4 ♗xc4 led to a draw in Polugaevsky-Kasparov, Bugojno 1982) 23...♖a3 24 ♗c2 a5 25 ♖e3 is probably the best winning try for White. This line can often lead to a topic extensively researched by Mark Dvoretsky: a rook endgame with an extra pawn for White on the a-file. However, given that

11...♕b6 looks playable, Black currently appears to lack any strong motivation to study this somewhat masochistic line.

12 ♗xb8!

12 0-0 ♖d8 13 e5 ♘e8 present no real danger for Black: 14 ♕d2 ♘xd6 15 ♖ad1 ♗f8 = (15...♘c6!? 16 exd6 ♘d4 17 ♘xd4 cxd4 18 ♘b5 ♖ac8) and 16 ♘e4?! ♘xe4 17 ♕xd8 ♕xb2 seems to be over-optimistic for White.

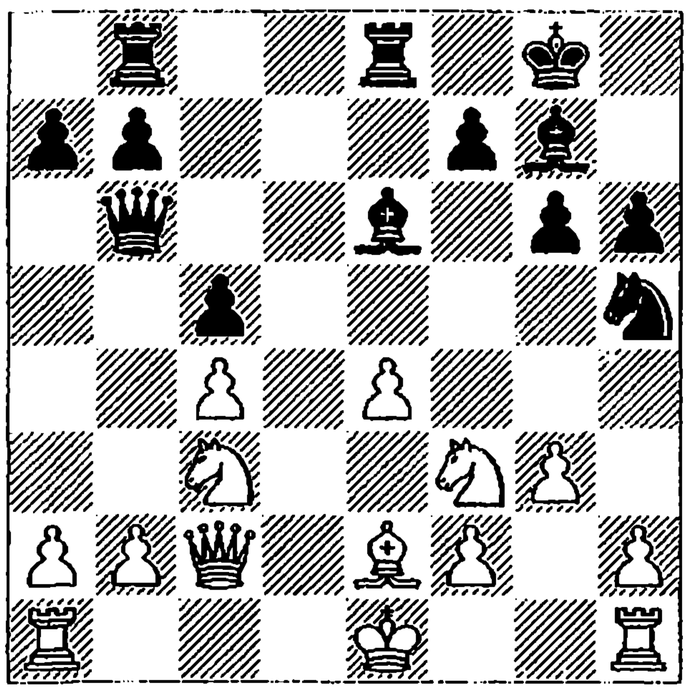
12 e5!? is a bit more of a serious try, but is not especially threatening either: 12...♘fd7 13 ♘b5 ♘c6! 14 ♗c7 ♕a6 15 0-0 ♖ec8 (15...♖ac8?? 16 ♘d6) 16 ♕b3 ♘dxe5 17 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 18 ♗xe5 ♗xe5 = Neustadt-Nesis, corr. 1985.

12...♖axb8 13 ♕c2 ♘h5!

The sacrifice 13...♘xe4 14 ♘xe4 does not seem to be sufficient for equality after 14...♕xb2 (or 14...♗f5 15 ♘fd2 ♖bd8 16 f3 ♕xb2 17 ♕xb2 ♗xb2 18 ♖b1 – Piket) 15 ♕xb2 ♗xb2 (Traito-Ivanchuk, USSR Army Cht (Sverdlovsk) 1987) 16 ♖b1 ♗xc4 17 ♘fd2!?.

14 g3! *(D)*

B



Preventing ...♘f4.

14...♗xc3+

The alternative is the ambitious 14...♗h3 15 ♘d2, and now:

a) 15...f5 16 ♗xh5 gxh5 17 0-0-0 fxe4 18 ♘dxe4 ♗f5 19 f3 and here Black's only chance for decent counterplay is 19...♕a6! (instead of 19...♕g6 20 ♖he1 a6 21 ♖d5!, Piket-Van Wely, Wijk aan Zee 1997).

b) 15...♘f6!? was recommended by Piket as providing compensation for the pawn. The position after 16 f3 requires serious study.

c) 15...♗xc3 16 bxc3 ♘f6 17 f3 is one more line where Black has some unclear compensation for the pawn.

15 ♕xc3

This allows Black to regain the pawn but keeps White's pawn-structure intact. The greedy 15 bxc3 is less safe: 15...♗g4 (15...♗h3 16 ♘d2 – line 'c' of the previous note) 16 h3 ♗xf3 17 ♗xf3 ♕e6 18 0-0-0 (18 0-0?! ♕xh3 is slightly better for Black) 18...b5! with an initiative for Black, Yermolinsky-Kindermann, Groningen FIDE KO 1997.

15...♗h3 16 e5!

16 0-0-0 leads to approximately equal play: 16...♖xe4 17 ♗d3 ♖ee8 (a less ambitious line is 17...♖e7 18 ♖he1 ♖be8 =) 18 ♘e5!? (Black's idea was 18 ♖he1 ♗g4!) 18...♕f6 19 ♖he1! (19 f4? ♘xf4) 19...♕xf2 (Borshch-Brodsky, corr. 1995) 20 ♗e4!? and White's piece activity compensates for the sacrificed pawn.

16 ♘d2 is inferior: 16...♗g2 17 ♖g1 ♗xe4 18 ♗xh5?! ♗f5+! 19 ♗e2 ♕e6, etc.

16...♗g2 17 ♖g1 ♗xf3 18 ♗xf3 ♕d6!

Both attacking the e5-pawn and preventing queenside castling.

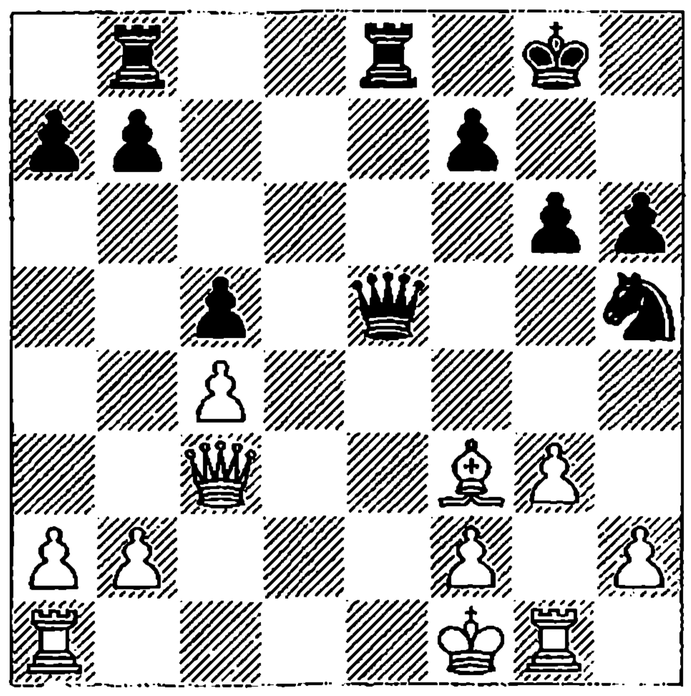
19 ♔f1

Not 19 ♗xh5? ♖xe5+ with the idea 20 ♗e2 ♖be8.

19...♕xe5 *(D)*

19...♖xe5 20 ♔g2 ♘g7 (20...♘f6!?) 21 ♖ad1 ♕c7 22 ♖d7 ♕xd7 23 ♕xe5 ♖c8 24 ♖d1 ♕c7 (C.Horvath-Stummer, Budapest 1992) 25 ♕f6!? and Black has problems to solve.

W



20 ♕a3!

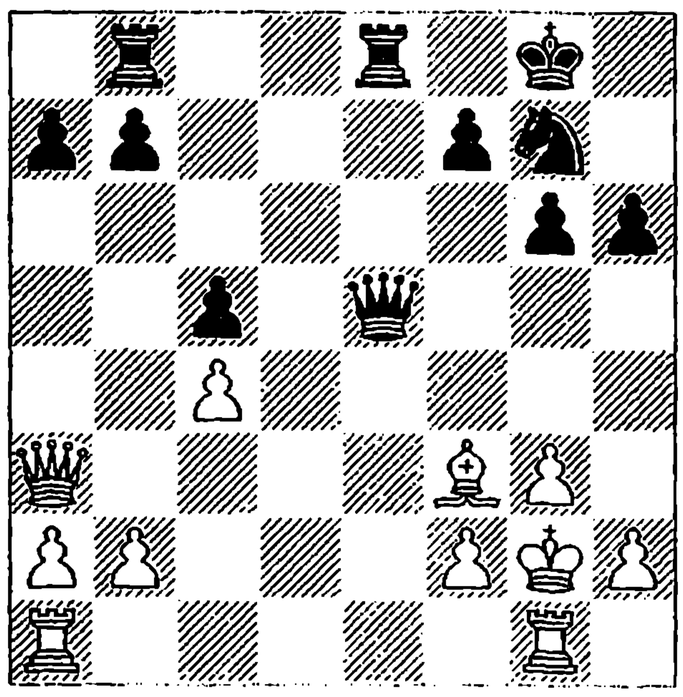
An interesting novelty. Having bishop for knight, one might expect White to avoid the exchange of rooks and be happy with an exchange of queens. But here Bareev correctly decides that there is no real risk (after ♔g2 the king's position will be very solid) and makes a move that at least keeps some pressure on Black. 20 ♕xe5 ♖xe5 21 ♔g2 leads to almost

dead equality after 21...♘g7 (Tukmakov-Gufeld, USSR Cht (Moscow) 1983) or 21...♘f6.

20...♘g7

The hyperactive 20...b5?! gets Black nowhere after 21 cxb5 ♖xb5 22 ♔g2. I must confess that, while analysing this game more than 20 years after it was played, I am more impressed with White's concept than I was immediately after the game, when I thought that I just lost an equal position by accident (maybe also because I tried to win it somehow). In fact, Black has a number of small problems: he must spend time improving the position of his knight, and at the same time he must parry the idea of ♕xa7 after ♗g2, by which White begins play on two flanks, which is profitable for him as he has a bishop against a knight. And, as I see now, it is not at all easy to find a path to ultimate equality. Thus, 20...b6!? 21 ♔g2 (if 21 ♕xa7 ♕xb2 22 ♗g2 then 22...♘f6! with the idea 23 ♖ab1 ♕d4 24 ♖xb6 ♘e4!) 21...a5 (placing the queenside pawns optimally and ignoring the problem knight) 22 ♖ge1 ♕f6 23 ♗xh5 gxh5 is one idea: Black's queen is more active than his opponent's, which to some extent compensates for his problems with his pawn-structure. But here too White has a small advantage.

21 ♔g2 *(D)*



21...♘e6

21...b6?! is answered by 22 ♕xa7! ♕xb2 23 ♖ab1 ♕f6 24 a4!.

21...a6!? was probably better than the text-move, but placing the pawn on the same coloured square as White's bishop is a kind of concession, and the line 22 ♖ad1 ♘e6 23 ♖ge1 ♕c7 (23...♕g5!?) 24 ♗d5 ♘d4 25 ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 26 b4!, with pressure for White, illustrates the potential problem.

22 ♖ge1

22 ♕xa7!? ♕xb2 23 ♖ge1 was also possible.

22...♕f6

After 22...♕c7? 23 ♕xa7 Black is a pawn down.

23 ♗d5!

After 23 ♕xa7?! Black can equalize by continuing 23...♘d4!? 24 ♗xb7 (or 24 ♘xd4 ♕xd4+ 25 ♕xb7 ♘xf3 26 ♕xf3 ♕xb2) 24...♖xe8+ ♖xe8 26 ♖f1 ♖e1! 27 ♖xe1 (27 ♕xa8 ♘e3+) 27...♘xe1+ 28 ♔f1 ♘d3 29 ♕xa8 ♕d4+.

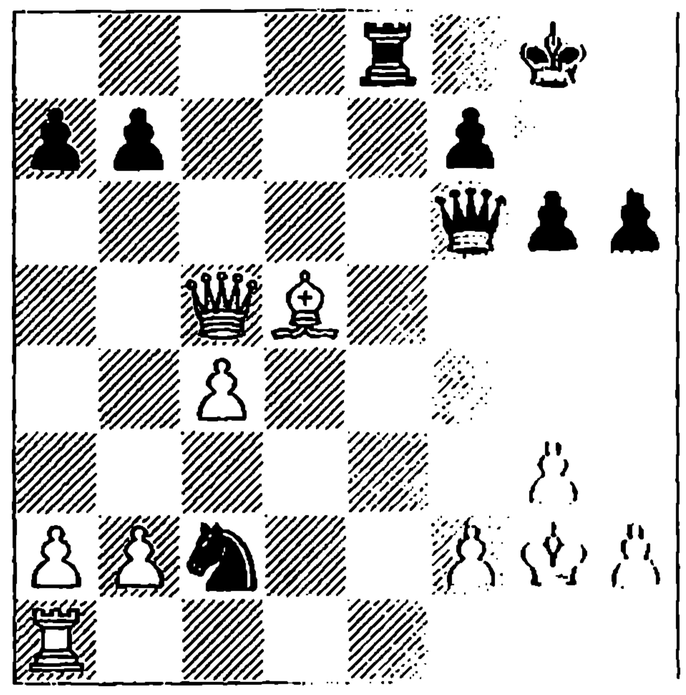
23...♘d4?

Black completes his plan to activate his knight, but unfortunately the move simply does not work tactically. Correct was 23...♕d6! 24 ♗xe6!? (24 ♖ad1!? maintains some pressure) 24...♖xe6 25 ♕xc5 ♖xe1 (25...♖e5 26 ♕xa7) 26 ♖xe1 ♕xb2 27 ♕c7 ♖f8 28 c5 ♕d4! and Black should survive.

24 ♕xc5! ♘c2

Or 24...b6 25 ♕c7 ♘c2 26 ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 27 ♖f1 with a clear advantage.

25 ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 *(D)*



26 ♖d1! ♖e2

26...♕xb2? loses to 27 ♗xf7+! ♔xf7 28 ♕d7+ ♖e7 29 ♕xe7+ ♔xe7 30 ♖d7+ (that is why White needed the rook on d1) 28...♔g8 29 ♕d5+ ♔h8 30 ♕f7 ♕e5 31 ♖d8+ ♔h7 32 ♔h3.

27 ♔f1!

Not 27 ♔g1? ♘e3 and White must give away the queen by 28 ♕xe3 ♖xe3 29 fxe3.

27...♖xf2+ 28 ♔g1!

One more important point: 28 ♕xa7? ♕e5! 29 ♔g1 ♕xf2+ 30 ♔xf2 ♘xd1+ would win for Black.

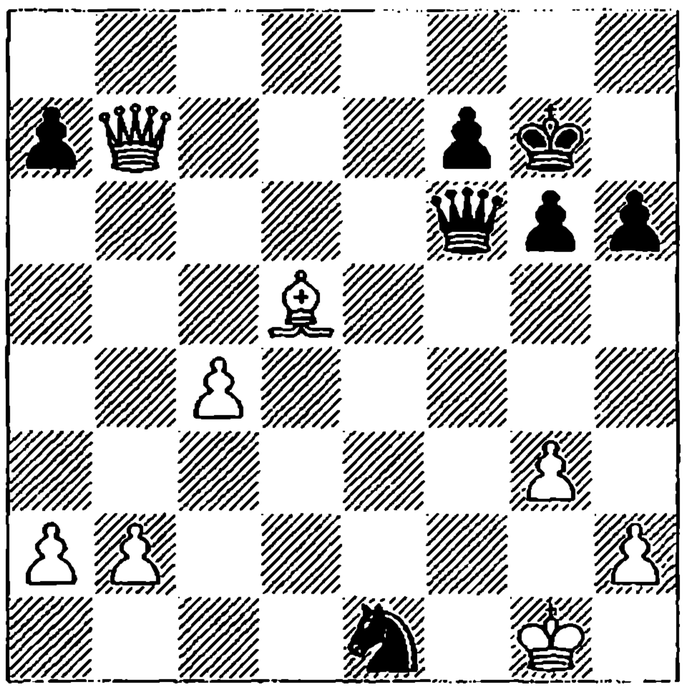
28...♖e2?!

28...♖f5! is interesting, allowing 29 ♕xa7? (29 ♕xa7? ♕e5!) 29...♕xf7 30 ♕d8+ ♔h7

(30...♔h7?! 31 ♖d7 ♘e3 32 h4! ♖f1+ 33 ♔h2 ♘g4+ 34 ♔h3 h5 35 ♕xb7) 31 ♖d7 ♘e3! and while it is more or less certain that White is winning, he faces technical problems and needs to find some not-so-obvious moves: 32 h4 (or 32 ♖xf7+!? ♖xf7 and now White must play 33 ♕h3!, with the idea 33...♘xc4 34 ♕h4! ♘b6 35 a4 followed by a5, gradually winning the a7-pawn) 32...♖f1+ 33 ♔h2 ♘g4+ 34 ♔h3 h5 35 ♕e8!!, etc. (but not 35 ♕xb7? ♖f2 36 ♖xf7+ ♖xf7 followed by ...♖f2).

29 ♖f1! ♖e1 30 ♖xe1 ♘xe1 31 ♕c8+! ♔g7
32 ♕xb7 *(D)*

B



32...♘d3?!

32...a5!? was the last possibility to organize some kind of resistance, albeit in an objectively lost position.

33 ♕xa7 h5 34 ♕e3 ♘e5?!

34...♘xb2 35 ♕f2!.

35 ♔g2 ♔h7 36 h3 ♕d6 37 a3 f5 38 ♕d4 ♕e7 39 b4 g5 40 ♕b6 h4

After 40...♘xc4 the simplest is 41 ♕e6! ♕xe6 42 ♗xe6 ♘xa3 43 ♗xf5+ ♔g7 44 ♗d3.

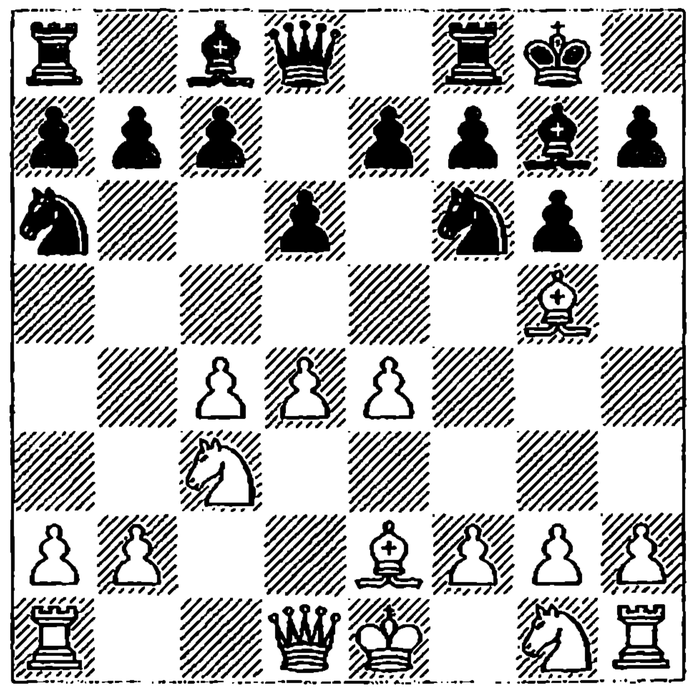
41 ♕e6 1-0

An excellent performance by Bareev, who after the game complained that his opponent was unrated and therefore it would make little sense to send the game to *Informator*, etc. Now I am rated and am glad to help Evgeny to publish the game after all.

Game 28
Plotnikov – Golubev
Kramatorsk 1990

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 5 ♗e2 0-0 6 ♗g5 ♘a6 *(D)*

W



7 ♕d2

This is the most popular response to Glek's move. In subsequent games we shall examine also 7 h4 and 7 f4.

7 ♘f3 is not considered critical, but it is also not absolutely innocuous: 7...h6 (7...♕e8 8 0-0 e5 9 ♖e1! transposes to a sideline of the Classical System with 7 0-0 ♘a6; 7...e5 8 0-0 h6 is likely to transpose to 7...h6 lines following 9 ♗e3 ♘g4 10 ♗c1 because after 9 ♗h1 Black has 9...g5! 10 ♗g3 ♘h5) 8 ♗e3 (8 ♗h1 e5! 9 dxe5 ♘h5) 8...♘g4 9 ♗c1 e5 10 0-0 and we have reached a position from the 7 ♗e3 h6 line of the Classical System, but with an extra tempo for Black. Still, this is a type of position where it is not so easy for either side to find useful moves (with White to move, Ivanchuk played ♖b1), and some problems for Black remain: 10...c6 (10...♕e8 11 dxe5 dxe5 12 h3 ♕e7 {Volzhin-Volokitin, Valle d'Aosta open 2002} 13 ♘d5! ♕d6 14 a4!; after 10...♕e7 11 ♘d5!? ♕e8 White has several interesting ways to attack the g4-knight; 10...♘f6!? is untested and deserves study) 11 dxe5! (11 h3 exd4! 12 ♘xd4 ♘f6) 11...dxe5 (11...♘xe5 12 ♘d4!) 12 ♕xd8 ♖xd8 13 h3 ♘f6 14 ♗e3 and White, who plans to continue with a3 and b4, is slightly better (V.Milov-Ponomariov, Biel 2000).

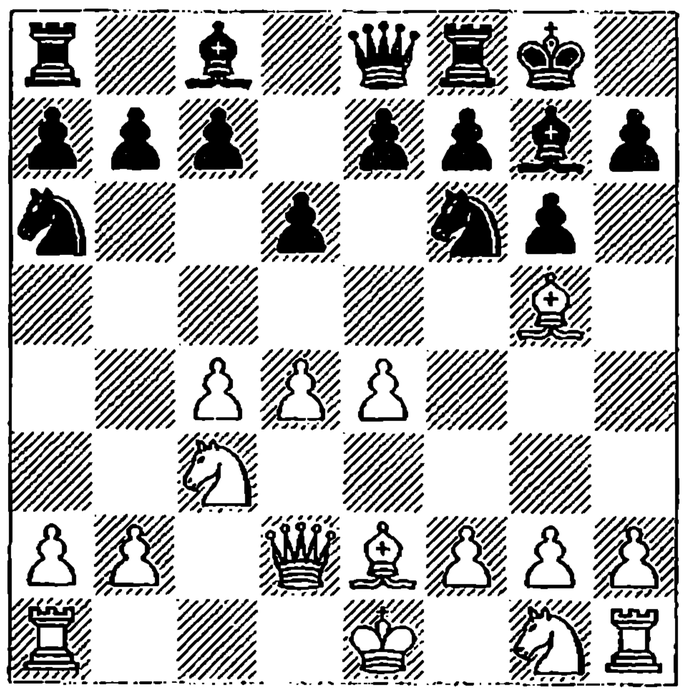
Among rare moves, Uhlmann's favourite 7 ♕c2!? should be mentioned. Then 7...c6!? (7...e5 8 dxe5! dxe5 9 ♖d1 ♕e8 10 ♘d5 ♕e7 should be answered by 11 ♘f3! c6 12 ♘xf6+ ♗xf6 13 ♗xf6 ♕xf6 14 c5 ♘c7 15 ♖d6 ♕e7 16 ♕c3 ♘e8 17 ♖d1 ♘f6 18 ♕e3 according to Moreno Carnero; other options are 7...h6 8 ♗e3 e5 9 dxe5 dxe5 10 ♖d1 ♕e8 and 7...♕e8!? 8 ♘f3 h6! 9 ♗d2 ♕e8 looks fully playable for Black, who has prepared ...e5 and should not be

afraid of 10 e5 dxe5 11 dxe5 ♘d7, Bönsch-Z.Almasi, Austrian Cht 2002/3.

7...e5

In the mid-1990s I often experimented with 7...♕e8!? *(D)*.

W



This move-order is not necessarily preferable in comparison with the much more common 7...e5 8 d5 ♕e8, but it can often confuse the opponent in a practical game. After 7...♕e8, White has tried many options:

a) 8 ♘f3 e5 = transposes to 7...e5 8 ♘f3 ♕e8!.

b) 8 c5 dxc5 9 d5 gives White some unclear compensation. Black can answer with 9...e6 or 9...c6.

c) 8 f3 e5 9 d5 ♘h5! 10 ♗d3 and now Black can try 10...♘f4!? (instead, 10...f5 11 ♘ge2 transposes to line 'i').

d) After 8 ♗d1!? I analysed the crazy-looking 8...♕c6!? but did not come to a definite conclusion about this move. Perhaps White can hope for some advantage after 8...c5 9 d5 e6 10 ♗a4!? and 8...e5 9 d5 ♘h5!? 10 ♗xh5 gxh5 11 ♘f3! f5 12 exf5 ♗xf5 13 ♘h4!, Leitão-Gormally, Bermuda 1998.

e) 8 f4 e5! 9 fxe5 dxe5 10 d5 ♘c5! with chances for both sides. Then 11 ♕c2 allows 11...♘fxe4! 12 ♘xe4 ♗f5 13 ♗d3 ♗xe4 14 ♗xe4 f5 15 ♗f3 e4 16 ♗e2 f4, when Black has pleasant compensation for the piece. For example, 17 ♔f1 ♕d7 (17...♕e5 is also interesting) 18 h3 (S.Mohr-Schaefer, Bundesliga 1992/3; 18 ♗h4 f3 19 gxf3 ♕g4 20 ♗f2 exf3 21 ♗xf3 ♖xf3 22 ♘xf3 ♕xf3! 23 ♖g1 ♖f8) and now Black can play 18...♖ae8!?.

f) 8 h4 e5 9 d5 ♘c5 10 ♗f3 (10 f3 ♘h5!) 10...a5 (10...♘g4!?, Raetsky-Miles, Cappelle la Grande 1995) 11 ♘ge2 ♗d7 12 h5! (12 ♘g3?! b5 13 cxb5 ♗xb5 14 ♗e2 ♗xe2 15 ♕xe2 ♖b8 16 0-0 ♘fd7 17 h5 f5 clearly favoured Black in M.Bakalarz-Golubev, Leuven open 1995) 12...b5 13 cxb5 ♗xb5 14 ♘xb5 ♕xb5 15 ♘c3! ♕b4 (15...♕xb2? 16 ♕xb2 ♘d3+ 17 ♔d2 ♘xb2 18 ♗e2!; 15...♘d3+ 16 ♔e2!? ♘f4+ 17 ♔d1) with chances for both sides, Tozer-Wu, British League (4NCL) 2004/5.

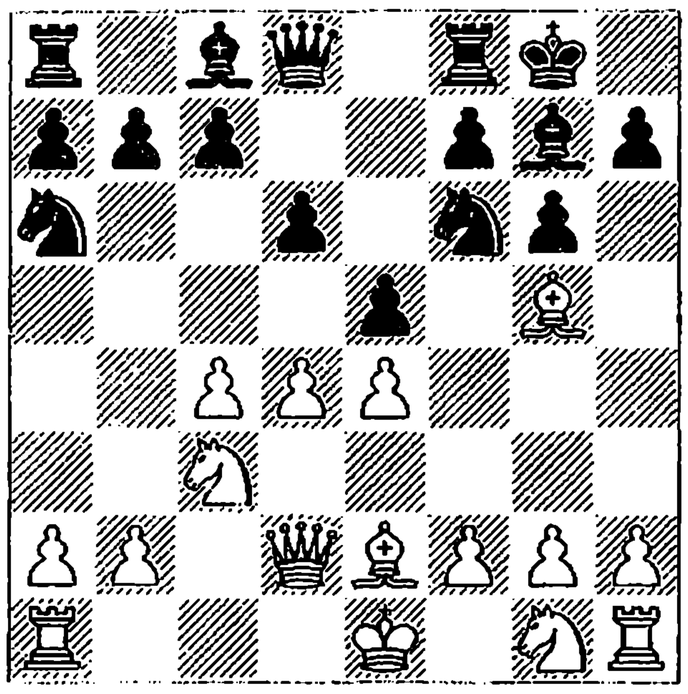
g) 8 0-0-0 e5 9 d5 ♘c5 10 f3 ♘h5! 11 b4 (in conjunction with 0-0-0, this advance is often a bit over-optimistic) 11...♘a6 12 a3 ♘f4 13 ♗f1 f6 14 ♗h4 ♗h6!? 15 ♔b2 f5 16 ♕c2 fxe4 17 ♘xe4 ♗f5 18 ♗f2 ♘b8 19 ♗e3 a5!? 20 b5 (20 g3? is refuted by 20...axb4! 21 axb4 ♘xd5! 22 ♗xh6 ♖a2+ 23 ♔xa2 ♘xb4+) 20...♗g7 (more accurate than 20...♘d7?! 21 g3 ♗g7 22 gxf4 exf4+ 23 ♗d4) 21 g3 ♘h5 22 ♗d3 ♘d7 = Raetsky-Golubev, Biel open 1994.

h) 8 ♗h6 e5 (I suspect that 8...♗xh6! 9 ♕xh6 e5 10 d5 ♘c5 is objectively stronger) 9 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 10 f4!? exd4 11 ♕xd4 c5 12 ♕e3! (12 ♕d3 ♘b4 13 ♕b1 b5!?) 12...♗f5 (12...♘b4 is insufficient: 13 0-0-0 ♗f5 14 ♗f3 ♕e6 15 ♕e2 ♖fe8 16 exf5 ♕xf5 17 ♕d2 ♖e3 18 g4 ♕xf4 {Gervasio-Aurel, Le Touquet open 1995} 19 ♔b1 with a clear advantage for White) 13 e5! (13 ♗f3? ♗xe4!) 13...dxe5 14 fxe5 ♔g8 (14...♘d7 15 g4!; 14...♘g4?! 15 ♗xg4 ♗xg4 16 ♘d5; 14...♔h8!?) 15 0-0-0! (much stronger than 15 ♕f4? ♘b4, Gervasio-Golubev, Le Touquet open 1995, 16 0-0-0 ♖d8!) and now 15...♘b4 does not seem to work well for Black (after the more cautious 15...♘g4 16 ♗xg4 ♗xg4 Black is only a bit worse): 16 ♘f3! (16 ♕xc5?! ♘xa2+ 17 ♘xa2 ♕a4 18 ♗d3 ♖ac8) 16...♘xa2+ (or 16...♘g4 17 ♕xc5 ♘xa2+ 18 ♘xa2 ♕a4 19 ♘d4 ♕xa2 20 ♘xf5 gxf5 21 h3! ♖ac8 22 ♕d4 ♖fd8?! 23 ♕f4 +–) 17 ♘xa2 ♕a4 and 18 ♗d3! ♘g4 19 ♕e2 favours White.

i) 8 ♗d3 e5 9 d5 ♘h5 10 ♘ge2 f5 11 f3 is quite a solid set-up for White. 11...f4!? (Black has tried many other options; an example of what he should avoid is 11...♘c5 12 ♗c2 a5 13 exf5! gxf5 14 0-0 ♗d7 15 ♖ae1 ♕g6?! 16 ♗e3 b6 17 ♔h1 ♘f6 18 g4!, Serper-Korotylev, St Petersburg open (Chigorin mem) 1993) 12 ♗h4 g5 13 ♗f2 (13 ♗xg5 ♕g6 14 ♗h4 ♕xg2) 13...g4 14 0-0-0 ♔h8 15 ♔b1 ♗f6 with chances for both sides, Dao Thien Hai-David, Wijk aan Zee 1997.

We now return to 7...e5 *(D)*:

W



8 d5

After 8 ♘f3 Black equalizes by 8...♕e8! and now 9 dxe5 dxe5 10 0-0 ♘c5 (Tukmakov-Gelfand, USSR Ch (Odessa) 1989) or 9 d5 ♘c5 10 ♗xf6 (10 ♕c2 h6!) 10...♗xf6 11 b4 ♘d7, etc.

8...c6

The principal alternative is 8...♕e8, when 9 ♗d1! (considered strongest) is at least 'easier' to play for White than is 8 ♗d1 after 7...♕e8!?.

9 h4

Or:

a) 9 ♘f3 is unpopular. In Bareev-G.Kuzmin, USSR Ch (Leningrad) 1990 Black obtained good play after 9...♘c5 10 ♗xf6 ♕xf6!? 11 b4 ♘a6 12 a3 c5!.

b) 9 ♗f3 is another rare idea. After 9...♕e8!? 10 ♘ge2 (10 dxc6 ♕xc6) 10...cxd5 (10...♘c7!? with the idea ...b5 – Beliavsky) 11 ♗xf6 (11 cxd5?! b5!) 11...♗xf6 12 ♘xd5 ♗g7 Black had no problems in Farago-Beliavsky, Ljubljana 2002.

c) 9 ♗d3 cxd5 10 cxd5 ♗d7 11 ♘ge2 ♘c5 12 ♗c2 a5 leads to approximately equal play. Obodchuk-Golubev, Groningen open 1993 continued 13 0-0 (13 a4 ♕b6) 13...b5 14 ♘g3 (an alternative is 14 f3 b4 15 ♘d1) 14...b4 15 ♘d1 ♕b6 16 ♔h1?! (better is 16 ♗h6) 16...♕a6! (threatening 17...♘fxe4) 17 ♖e1 ♘g4! 18 ♕e2 ♕xe2 19 ♘xe2 f6 20 ♗d2 f5 21 f3 ♗h6! 22 ♗xh6 ♘xh6 with a clear advantage for Black in the endgame.

d) 9 f3 cxd5 10 cxd5 ♗d7 is a more popular sequence, which often transposes back to our main game. Now:

d1) 11 g4 h6!? (after 11...♕a5 White plays 12 ♘h3!) 12 ♗e3 h5 13 h3 ♘c5! has given Black good results in practice.

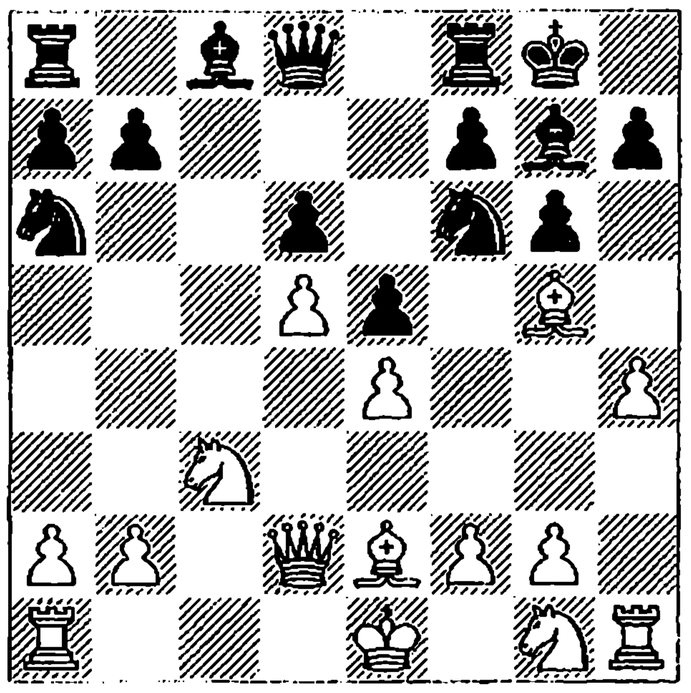
d2) 11 ♗b5 ♗xb5 (another idea for Black is 11...♕a5!? 12 ♗xd7 ♘xd7 and 13 ♗e7 ♖fc8 14 ♗xd6 ♘b6! is clearly not advisable for White) 12 ♘xb5 ♕b6 13 ♘c3 ♘c5 14 ♘ge2 (after 14 0-0-0 ♖fc8 15 ♔b1 Black can play 15...♕a6!? followed by ...b5 or maybe 15...a5 16 ♘ge2 a4 17 ♘c1 ♘fd7 with the idea 18 h4 ♘b3!?) 14...a5!? with reasonable counterplay (worse is 14...♕xb2?! 15 ♕xb2 ♘d3+ 16 ♔d2 ♘xb2 17 ♖ab1 ♘c4+ 18 ♔d3 ♘a5 19 ♘b5! ♖fd8 20 ♖hc1, Röder-Calaf Rellver, Terrassa open 1999).

d3) 11 ♗xa6 bxa6 12 ♘ge2 ♖b8 13 0-0 (or 13 ♗e3 ♖b7 14 0-0 ♘e8! followed by ...f5) 13...♕b6+ with approximately equal chances (13...♕a5?! 14 ♗e3 ♖b7 15 a3 ♖fb8 16 b4 ♕d8 17 ♖fb1 allowed White to develop some pressure in Krizsany-Golubev, Loosdorf open 1993).

d4) 11 h4 transposes to our main game.

9...cxd5 10 cxd5 *(D)*

B



A typical situation for this line: White is preparing a kingside assault, while Black hopes to create counterplay on the queenside. Honestly speaking, it is difficult for either side to make serious progress.

10...♗d7

Possibly 10...♕a5 deserves attention: 11 h5 ♘c5 12 ♖b1 ♕b4 (instead of 12...♕b6 13 ♗f4 Raetsky-Dydyshko, Erfurt 1993). Another playable option is 10...♘c5 11 f3 and now 11...♕b6 or 11...a5.

11 f3

Otherwise:

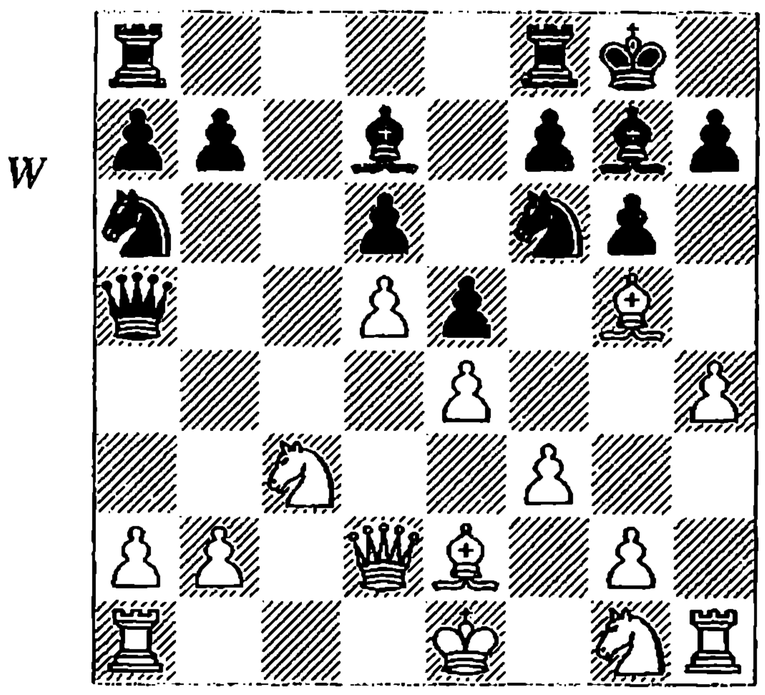
a) 11 ♗xa6 bxa6 12 h5 ♕a5 13 ♘ge2 ♖ab8 14 f3 ♕b6! with sufficient counterchance Moskalenko-Glek, Odessa (Kotov mem) 1989.

b) 11 h5!? ♘c5 12 f3 a5 (12...♕a5 13 ♖h1 13 g4 a4! with chances for both sides (13 h6 14 ♘h3 b4 15 ♘d1 and here the correctness of the sacrifice 15...♗xg4 16 fxg4 ♘cxe4, as in

Petursson-Mortensen, Valby 1994, can be questioned by 17 ♕d3!?).

11...♕a5 *(D)*

11...♕e8?! is too passive. It transposes to Ivanchuk-Topalov, Erevan OL 1996, which continued 12 ♘h3! ♘c5 13 g4 h5 14 ♘f2.



12 ♘h3

White ensures that he will always have ♘f2 after ...h5. The alternative is 12 g4:

a) 12...♖fc8 13 h5 (13 ♘h3!?) 13...♖c7!? (13...♘c5 14 ♖b1 ♘a4?! 15 ♘xa4 ♕xa4 16 b3 ♕d4 17 ♕xd4! exd4 18 ♗d3) 14 ♘b5 (14 hxg6 fxg6 15 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 16 ♕h6 ♗e8!, protecting the h7-pawn) 14...♕xd2+ 15 ♔xd2 ♗xb5 16 ♗xb5 ♖ac8 17 ♗d3 (Ponomariov & Golubev) is possibly a bit better for White.

b) 12...h5!? 13 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 14 gxh5 ♔g7! (an interesting pawn sacrifice, which first occurred in Bykhovsky-Glek, Moscow 1988) 15 hxg6 fxg6 16 h5 ♖h8 17 ♗xa6 bxa6 18 ♕g2 g5! with an unclear position where 19 0-0-0? ♖hc8 gives Black a strong attack, Ubilava-Calvo Sanchez, Elgoibar 1993.

12...♘h5!?

A radical and sharp method of preventing the opponent's plan.

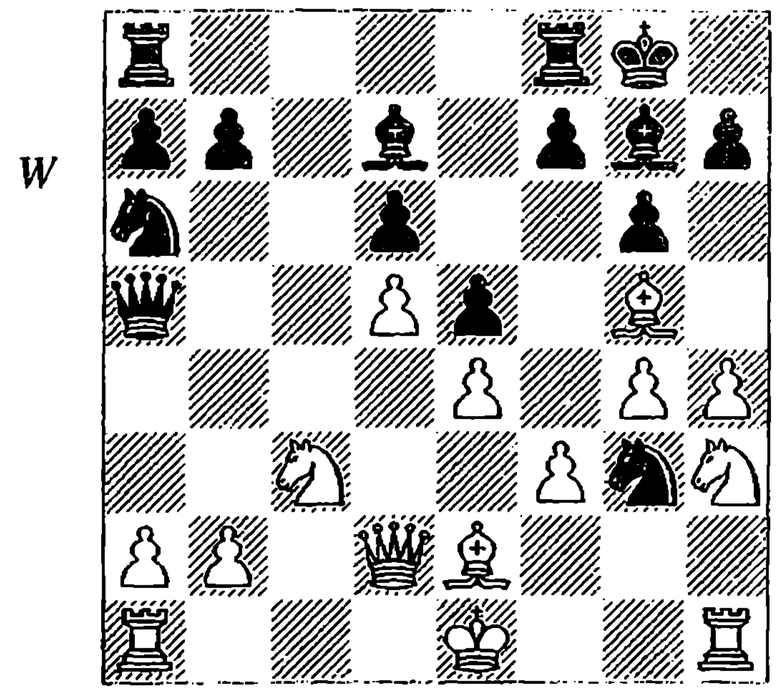
After 12...♘c5 White has 13 ♖b1! ♕b4 14 ♘b5!. If 12...♖fc8, then White executes his plan by 13 g4! (13 ♘f2?! ♘h5!) with the idea 13...h5 14 ♘f2.

12...♖ab8!? deserves attention: 13 g4 (13 ♘b5 ♘b4!) 13...b5, and if 14 ♘d1 (Schandorff-Olsen, Copenhagen 1999), then 14...b4 followed by 15...♘c5.

13 g4!

13 ♗e7? ♖fe8 14 ♗xd6 ♘g3 gives Black excellent chances.

13...♘g3 *(D)*



14 ♖g1?!

14 ♗xa6! is correct, as concrete calculation demonstrates: 14...♕xa6 (14...♘xh1?! 15 ♗xb7 ♖ab8 16 ♗c6 is clearly better for White) 15 ♖g1 ♘h5 (forced) 16 gxh5! (16 ♗h6 ♘f4!) 16...♗xh3 and now (rather than 17 0-0-0 b5) 17 ♗h6!?. The objective value of 12...♘h5 depends on the evaluation of this position, where Black faces some problems:

a) Insufficient is 17...♕b6?! 18 0-0-0 ♕d4 19 ♕g5! f6 20 ♕e3 ♕xe3+ 21 ♗xe3.

b) 17...♖ac8 18 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 is strongly answered by 19 f4! (19 ♕g5? ♕d3!), when, for example, 19...exf4 20 ♕xf4 ♖fe8 21 0-0-0 ♕xa2 22 h6+ ♔f8 23 ♕xd6+ ♖e7 24 ♕f6 ♖xc3+ 25 ♕xc3 ♖xe4 26 ♖d4 clearly favours White.

c) 17...♗xh6 18 ♕xh6 ♕d3 19 ♔f2! (19 hxg6 fxg6! 20 ♖xg6+ leads to a perpetual check) 19...♕d4+! is critical. Black may hope to maintain the balance.

14...♘xe2 15 ♘xe2 ♘b4!

The endgame after 15...♕xd2+ 16 ♔xd2 is acceptable for Black, but he is already fighting for more.

16 ♔f1

16 ♔f2 ♕b5 17 a4 ♕c5+ 18 ♗e3 ♕c4 19 b3?! (19 ♖a3 a5) 19...♘d3+ 20 ♔g2 ♕xb3 21 ♖gb1 ♕c4 22 ♖xb7 ♗c8 was better for Black in G.Taylor-Smirin, Winnipeg (Canadian Open) 1997.

16...♗b5

There were other ways to parry the threat of 17 a3 and develop the initiative. For example, 16...♕b5!?.

17 a3

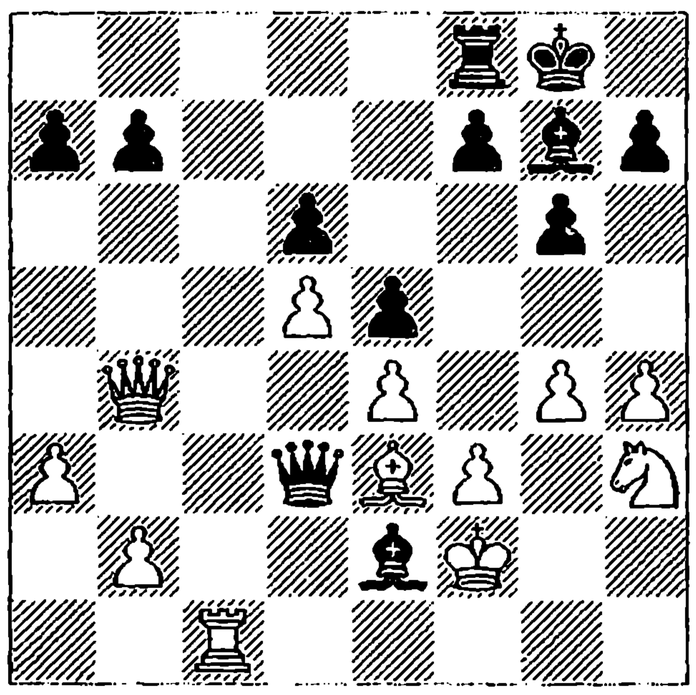
17 ♖g2!?.

17...♕a6 18 ♕xb4 ♗xe2+ 19 ♔f2 ♕d3!? 20 ♗e3

20 ♕c3! is a better defence.

20...♖ac8 21 ♖ac1 ♖xc1 22 ♖xc1 *(D)*

B



22...♗xf3!

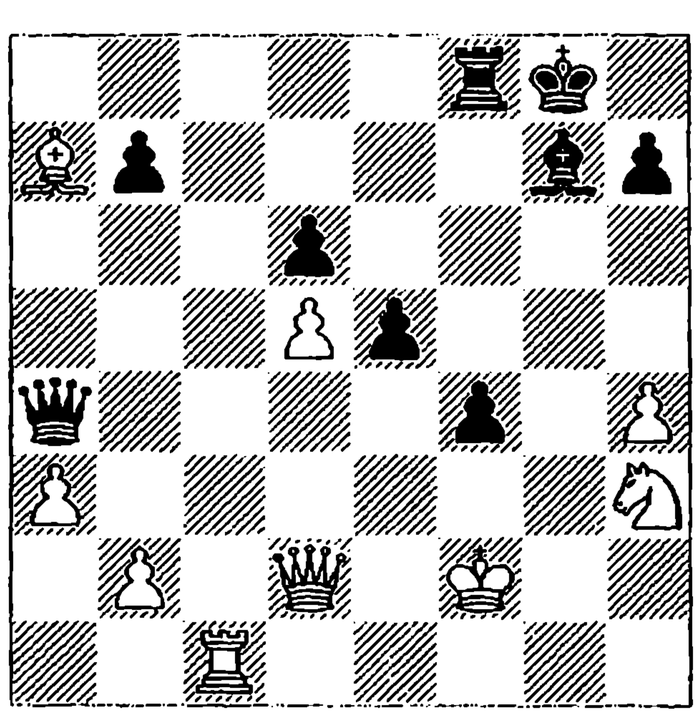
This sacrifice creates more problems for White than 22...f5 23 ♖c3 ♕a6 (23...♕d1 24 ♖c1) 24 exf5 gxf5 25 gxf5 ♗f1 (25...♖xf5? 26 ♖c8+) 26 ♘g1. Well, at least from a practical point of view!

23 ♔xf3 f5 24 gxf5 gxf5 25 ♕d2

After 25 ♕c3!? ♕xe4+ 26 ♔f2 the calm prophylactic move 26...♔h8! is surprisingly unpleasant for White.

25...♕xe4+ 26 ♔f2 f4! 27 ♗xa7 ♕a4 *(D)*

W



28 ♗b6?

The decisive mistake. White loses a minor piece anyway, so it was necessary to play for a blockade by the immediate 28 ♘g5! ♕xa7+ (28...e4 29 ♔g2!; 28...f3? 29 ♗d4!) 29 ♔f3!. Black remains the stronger side, but his victory is not guaranteed. For example, 29...e4+ 30 ♘xe4 ♗xb2 31 ♕xb2! ♕e3+ 32 ♔g2 ♕xe4+ 33 ♔h2 ♕e5 34 ♖g1+! ♔h8 35 ♕xe5+ dxe5 36 ♖g5! with realistic hopes for survival.

28...♕b3! 29 ♘g5 ♕xb6+ 30 ♔f3

Or 30 ♔g2 ♗h6!.

30...♕b3+

This is the difference.

31 ♔e4

If 31 ♖c3, then 31...e4+.

31...♕g3

White is not able to survive with his centralized king. 32 ♘f3 ♕g6# is just an illustration.

32 ♖c7 f3 33 ♖xg7+ ♔xg7 34 ♘e6+ ♔g8 35 ♘xf8 f2 0-1

Game 29

Raetsky – Golubev

Lucerne open 1994

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 5 ♗e2 0-0 6 ♗g5 h6

This move is certainly playable, but I shall not be considering its specific ramifications in great detail. The game is of particular interest to us because it is relevant to our coverage of the ...♘a6 lines. Thus after 6...♘a6 7 h4, 7...e5 8 d5 h6 9 ♗e3 ♘c5 reaches the position after Black's 9th move of the current game. After the alternative 7...c5 8 d5, one example is 8...e6 9 ♕d2 exd5 10 exd5 ♕e8! 11 ♔f1 ♘e4 12 ♘xe4 ♕xe4 = Lerner-Golod, Israeli Ch (Tel Aviv) 2002.

7 ♗e3 ♘bd7

After 7...c5, 8 d5 transposes to a version of the 6...c5 line that is comfortable for Black. The critical options for White are 8 dxc5 and 8 e5!?.

7...e5 8 d5 ♘bd7 9 ♕d2 ♘c5 10 f3 transposes to the 6...♘bd7 line (see Game 31, Polak-Golubev).

8 h4

The main continuation is 8 ♕d2! c5! 9 d5 ♔h7 (a line developed for Black by Lanka, Bologan and Shirov) where Black is trying to obtain counterplay on queenside by ...b5.

8...e5 9 d5 ♘c5 *(D)*

10 ♕c2

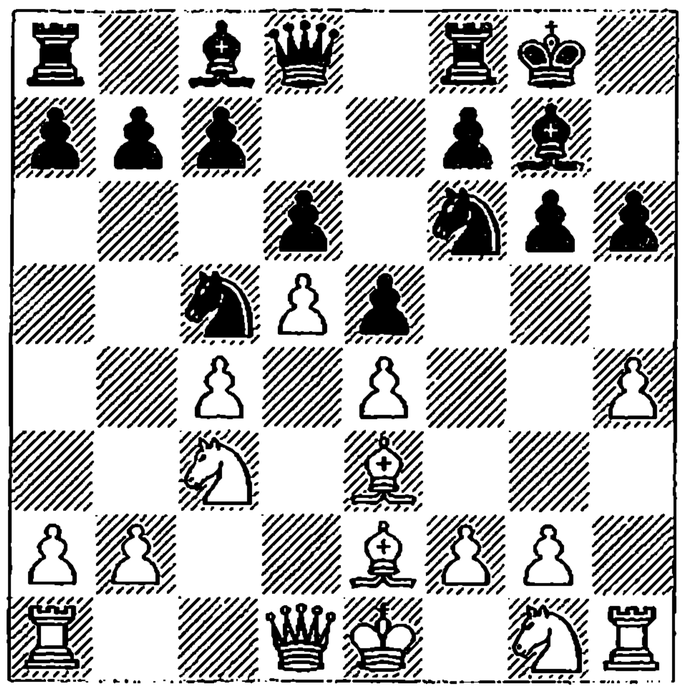
10 f3?! allows 10...♘h5!.

10...c6 11 h5

11 b4? fails to 11...♘cxe4 12 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 13 dxc6 (13 ♕xe4? allows 13...♗f5 14 ♕f3 e4, winning the a1-rook) 13...f5 with excellent prospects for Black. I suspect that 11 ♗xc5!? dxc5 and now maybe 12 h5 is playable for White. But, amazingly, it has not been tested in practice.

11...cxd5

W



The structure after 11...g5 12 f3 a5 13 g4!? (Bareev-Kasparov, Linares 1992) is a bit passive and potentially dangerous for Black. It makes sense to avoid it.

12 cxd5

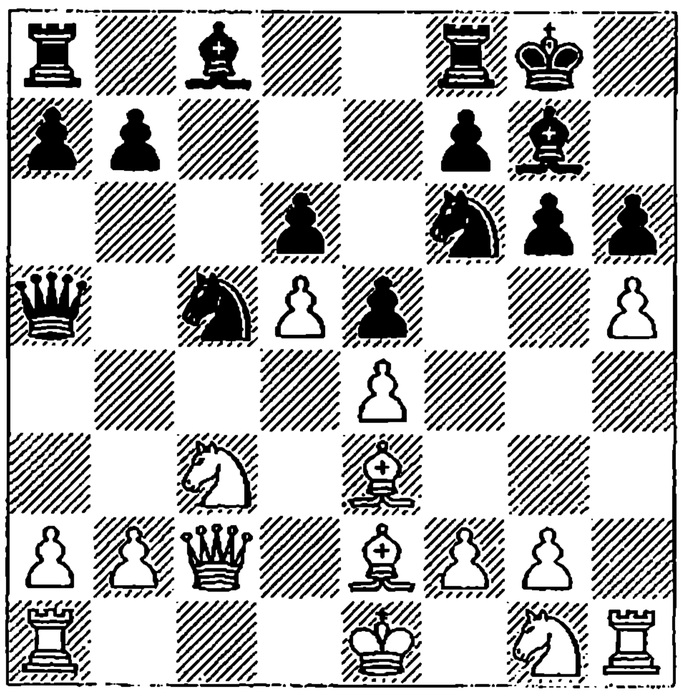
Now after 12 ♗xc5!? Black has 12...d4 13 ♗b4 a5 14 ♗a3 dxc3 with complicated play.

12...♕a5! *(D)*

This move was almost unknown at the time when my game versus Raetsky was played. It was not a result of preparation – it just looked logical to me to create the threat to the e4-pawn.

Instead, Bareev-Gelfand, Biel IZ 1993 continued 12...♗d7 13 hxg6 fxg6 14 b4! ♘a6 15 a3 h5 16 f3 ♘h7?! (16...♘c7! was suggested by Gelfand as an improvement, and led to more or less acceptable results for Black in later games) 17 ♘b5! ♗xb5 18 ♗xb5 ♗f6 19 ♘h3 ♗h4+ 20 ♔e2 ♘c7 21 ♗d3 with some advantage for White.

W



13 ♔f1

13 ♗d2 is possibly more critical, though after 13...♗d7 (13...♕b6!? 14 hxg6 fxg6 15 ♗xh6 ♗xh6 16 ♖xh6 ♔g7 17 ♖h1 ♗d7 is also playable for Black) 14 hxg6 fxg6 Black has decent play: 15 f3 ♖ac8! 16 ♖b1 ♕d8 17 ♗xh6 ♗xh6 18 ♖xh6 ♔g7 19 ♖h1 ♘h5 (19...♖h8!? Smirin) 20 ♕d2 ♖h8 21 ♗f1 ♕b6 with good compensation for the pawn, Yakovich-Smirin, St Vincent Ech 2000. Or 15 ♖b1 ♕d8!? (15...♕b6 16 ♗e3 a5, Hauchard-Hebden, Cappelle la Grande 1998), when 16 b4? fails to 16...♘cxe4 17 ♘xe4 ♘xe4.

13...♗d7

More solid than 13...♗g4 14 f3! ♘xh5 15 ♖xh5! ♗xh5 16 g4 or 13...♘g4 14 ♗xg4 ♗xg4 15 f3 ♗d7 16 hxg6, when the extremely brave 16...b5!? led to a draw after 17 ♗xh6 b4 18 ♕c1 (this sacrifice does not look necessary) 18...bxc3 19 ♗xg7 ♗b5+! 20 ♘e2 ♗xe2+ 21 ♔g1 ♔xg7 22 ♕h6+ ♔f6 23 ♕h4+ ♔g7 24 ♕h6+ in Smit-Hunter, corr. 1972.

14 hxg6

The start of a mistaken idea. After 14 a3 ♘a4!? Black has sufficient counterplay.

14...fxg6 15 ♗xh6?

White decides to win a pawn. However, after this operation all the dark squares in his camp will be potentially vulnerable, Black will obtain additional possibilities on both f- and h-files and, generally, every white piece will be less active than its black counterpart. The sacrifice of the h6-pawn is an important idea for Black in this line, but here it works especially well.

15...♗xh6

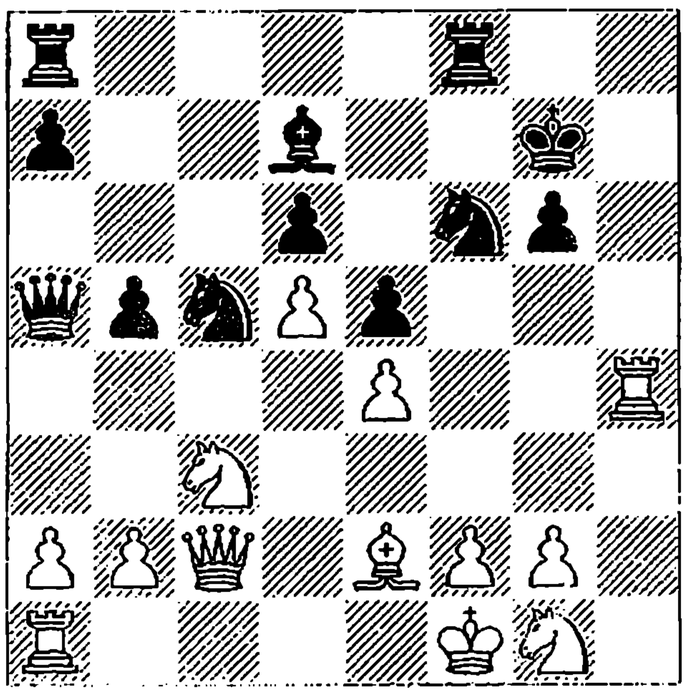
The immediate advance 15...b5 is also possible. Then 16 ♕c1? b4 was clearly better for Black in M.S.Hansen-Geenen, corr. (Bozidar Kazić mem) 1999.

16 ♖xh6 ♔g7 17 ♖h4

Or 17 ♖h1 b5!.

17...b5! *(D)*

W



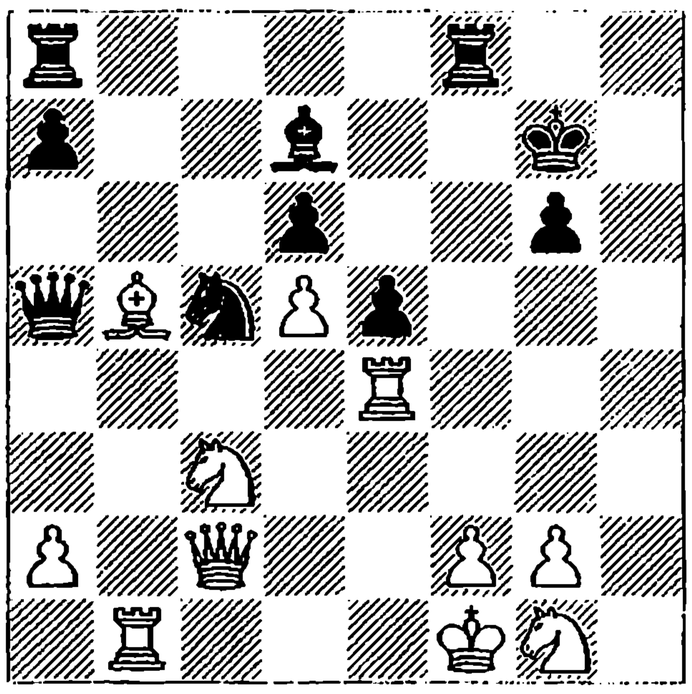
18 b4!

A good practical decision. Passive defence by, for example, 18 ♕c1 ♖h8!? 19 ♖xh8 ♖xh8 20 f3 ♖h1!? is not promising for White.

18...♕xb4 19 ♖b1 ♕a5 20 ♗xb5 ♘fxe4!

This counterblow is correct in itself, but unfortunately my planned follow-up was a big blunder. Very unclear is 20...g5 21 ♗xd7! gxh4 22 ♗f5 with the idea 22...♕a6+ 23 ♘ge2 ♕d3 24 ♕c1! ♘fxe4 25 ♖b7+! ♖f7 26 ♖xf7+ ♔xf7 27 ♔g1!.

21 ♖xe4 *(D)*



21...♖xf2+??

The only problem with this nice move is that it loses by force. 21...♘xe4! 22 ♕xe4 and now:

a) 22...♕xc3? 23 ♗xd7 ♖f4 24 ♕e2 (24 ♘e2!?) 24...♖af8 25 ♘h3 favours White.

b) 22...♗xb5+ 23 ♘xb5 ♖ab8 is equal: 24 ♕d3 (24 a4 a6!? 25 ♘xd6 ♕c5 26 ♕xe5+ ♔h6 27 ♕h2+ ♔g7 28 ♕e5+ =) 24...a6 25 ♘c3 ♕xc3!? 26 ♕xc3 ♖xb1+ 27 ♔e2 ♖xg1 28 ♕c7+ ♖f7 29 ♕xd6 ♖xg2 30 ♕xe5+ ♔g8 31 ♕e8+ ♔g7 32 d6 ♖gxf2+ 33 ♔d3 ♖7f3+ 34 ♔c4 ♖c2+ 35 ♔b4 ♖d3 and the draw is inevitable.

c) 22...♗f5! (strongest) 23 ♕b4 ♕b6 24 ♖b2 ♖ab8 25 a3! ♕c7! (25...a6 26 g4!) 26 ♘d1 ♖fc8! (26...a6 27 ♕c4!) 27 ♕a4! ♗c2 28 ♖xc2 ♕xc2 29 ♕g4!? ♖c7! (29...♖xb5? 30 ♕d7+ =) 30 ♗e2 ♖b1 with an advantage for Black.

22 ♔xf2

Not 22 ♕xf2? ♘xe4 23 ♘xe4 ♗xb5+.

22...♕xc3 23 ♖c4!

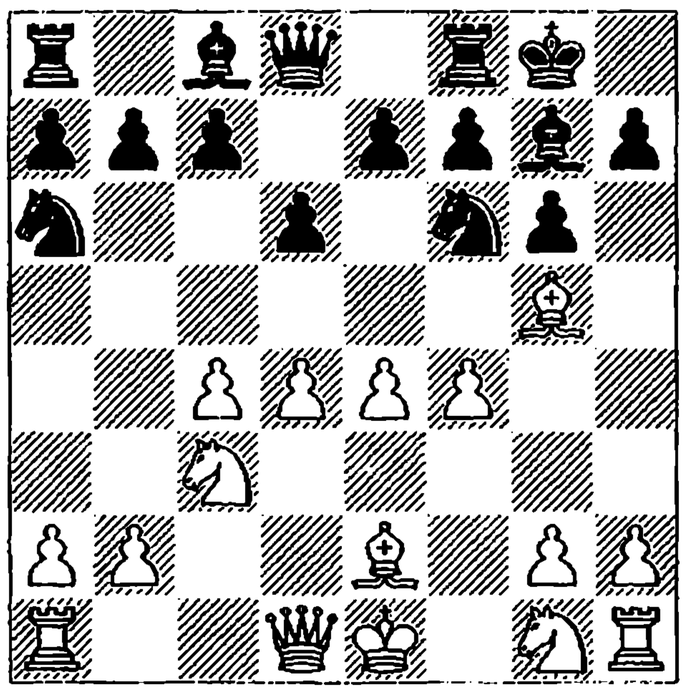
I had overlooked this move and saw only 23 ♖e2? ♕d4+, etc. Now Black does not have the vital check from d4 and, strictly speaking, I could well have resigned immediately.

23...♖f8+ 24 ♘f3 ♕xc2+ 25 ♖xc2 ♗f5 26 ♖xc5 dxc5 27 ♖b3 e4 28 ♘e5 ♗e6+ 29 ♔e3 ♗xd5 30 ♖a3 ♖f5 31 ♖xa7+ ♔h6 32 ♘g4+ ♔g5 33 ♘f2 c4 34 a4 ♔h4 35 ♖g7 c3 36 ♖c7 ♖g5 37 ♘xe4 ♗xe4 38 ♔xe4 ♖xg2 39 ♖xc3 ♖a2 40 ♔f3 g5 41 ♖c4+ 1-0

A rare case of a loss which I do not regret at all: in the last round in Lucerne I managed to win with Black against Istratescu to score my first GM norm. And in my very next tournament in Biel, Alexander Raetsky 'returned the favour' in our game with an even more terrible blunder. A lot of time has passed since then. Raetsky has organized nine open tournaments in his home town Voronezh. An incredible stability for Russia! In 2005, Alexander became a grandmaster.

Game 30
Dumitrache – Golubev
Bucharest 1996

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 5 ♗e2 0-0 6 ♗g5 ♘a6 7 f4!? *(D)*



An ambitious continuation. White plays very energetically in the centre. Still, Black seems to have enough resources to create sufficient counterplay.

7...c6

7...♕e8 is answered by 8 ♘f3! (8 ♕d2?! transposes to 7 ♕d2 ♕e8 8 f4 – see note 'e' to Black's 7th move in Game 28) 8...e5 9 fxe5 dxe5 10 d5! (if White is well developed, this pawn-structure is usually profitable for him) 10...h6 11 ♗h4 ♘g4 12 ♕d2 f5 13 h3 ♘f6 14 0-0!? with the better prospects for White, Yakovich-Van den Doel, Leeuwarden open 1997.

8 ♘f3 ♘c7!

Threatening to exchange White's bishop by 9...♘e6, and also preparing both ...d5 and ...b5.

Certainly, ...♘a6, ...c6 and ...♘c7 is not a common set-up in the King's Indian – but the same can be said about White's ♗e2, ♗g5 and f4.

The immediate 8...d5 is not very good in view of 9 ♗xf6!. Also rare is 8...b5 9 cxb5 cxb5 10 ♗xb5 ♖b8. After 11 ♕e2 (Gulko-Barsov, Montreal 1992) 11...♕b6 12 0-0 (12 e5 ♘c7 13 ♗c4 ♘h5! Korchnoi) 12...♘c7 13 a4 a6 14 a5 ♕b7 15 ♗c4 White is better -- Gulko.

9 ♗h4!?

Moving the bishop to a safer position where it cannot be attacked by ...♘e6 or by ...d5 and ♘e4.

9 d5 cxd5 (simpler than 9...♘h5!?) 10 cxd5 ♘a6 11 ♘d2 ♘e8 12 ♖b1 f5! 13 0-0 ♘c5 gave Black good play in Sturua-Kempinski, Leon Echt 2001.

9 ♕d2 *(D)* is an obvious alternative:

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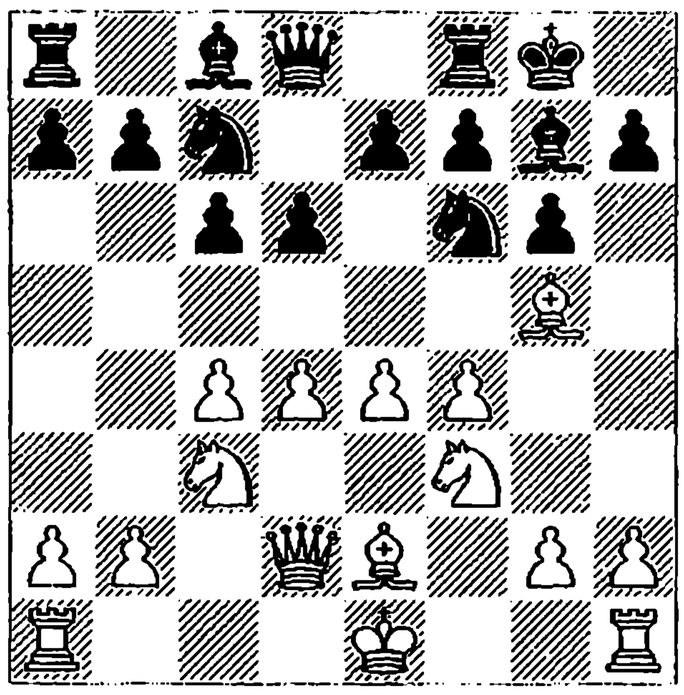

a) 9...b5!? 10 cxb5 (10 e5 b4! 11 exf6 bxc3 12 bxc3 exf6 13 ♗h4 ♗f5!? 14 0-0 ♕d7 15 h3 ♖fe8 16 ♖fe1 ♗e4! 17 ♘h2 f5 was quite good for Black in Maximenko-Kasimdzhanov, Dos Hermanas Internet 2004) 10...cxb5 11 e5 (11 ♗xf6 exf6!? {Mirković-Brenjo, Kladovo 1994} 12 ♘xb5 ♘xb5 13 ♗xb5 ♕b6 with good compensation for Black) 11...dxe5!? (possibly simpler is 11...b4 12 exf6 bxc3 13 bxc3 exf6 14 ♗h4 ♖e8 15 0-0 ♘d5!?, as in Meins-Reschke, Bundesliga 1998/9) 12 dxe5! (12 fxe5 ♘fd5 and now 13 ♘xb5 ♘e6!? or 13 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 14 ♗xb5 f6! 15 ♗h4 fxe5 16 dxe5 ♗h6 17 ♕xh6 ♕a5+ 18 ♕d2 ♕xb5 with sufficient compensation for the pawn – Ponomariov & Golubev) 12...b4 (after 12...♕xd2+ 13 ♘xd2 b4 White has the strong reply 14 ♘b5! ♘xb5 15 ♗xb5 ♖b8 16 ♗c4!?) 13 ♘b5 ♘xb5 14 ♕xd8 (not 14 ♗xb5?! ♕b6!) 14...♖xd8 15 ♗xb5 ♖b8 16 ♗c4! (16 ♗c6 ♖b6 17 ♖c1 ♗a6!) 16...♖e8 with a playable, but slightly worse position for Black.

b) 9...d5 10 ♗xf6 exf6 (this recapture is better than 10...♗xf6?! 11 cxd5 cxd5 12 e5 ♗g7 13 h4) 11 exd5 cxd5 12 c5 ♗f5 13 0-0 ♗e4 14 b4 ♘e6 15 ♖ad1 and now 15...b6?! 16 ♘xe4 (16 ♕c3!? bxc5 17 ♘xe4 dxe4 18 dxc5 ♕b8 19 ♕xe4 ♖e8 20 ♕c4 a5 21 b5 ♘xc5 22 ♕xc5 ♖xe2 23 b6) 16...dxe4 does not work well because White has 17 f5! (Ponomariov & Golubev). But 15...f5 16 ♘e5 f6 17 ♘f3 g5!, as suggested by John Watson at the *TWIC* website, might well solve Black's problems.

9...d5!?

Also here 9...b5!? deserves attention. For example, 10 e5 ♘g4! 11 ♕d2 dxe5!? 12 ♘xe5 (12 fxe5!? c5 with complicated play – Evseev) 12...♘xe5 13 dxe5 ♕xd2+ 14 ♔xd2 b4 15 ♘e4 f6 16 exf6 exf6 17 ♖ad1 ♘e6! and Black is OK, Evseev-Khismatullin, Samara open 2003.

10 e5

Sorin-O.Foisor, Olot open 1992 continued 10 cxd5 cxd5 11 e5 ♘e4 12 ♕b3 ♗h6 13 g3 b6 14 0-0 ♗b7 15 ♖ad1 ♘e6 16 ♘e1 ♘xc3 17 ♕xc3 f6 and Black was not worse. After 10 ♗xf6 exf6 11 exd5 cxd5 12 c5 Black can obtain counterchances by 12...♗g4!? or by 12...♗f5!? 13 0-0 ♗e4.

10...♘e4! *(D)*

10...♘h5 11 g3 f6? 12 ♘d2 favours White according to Hazai.

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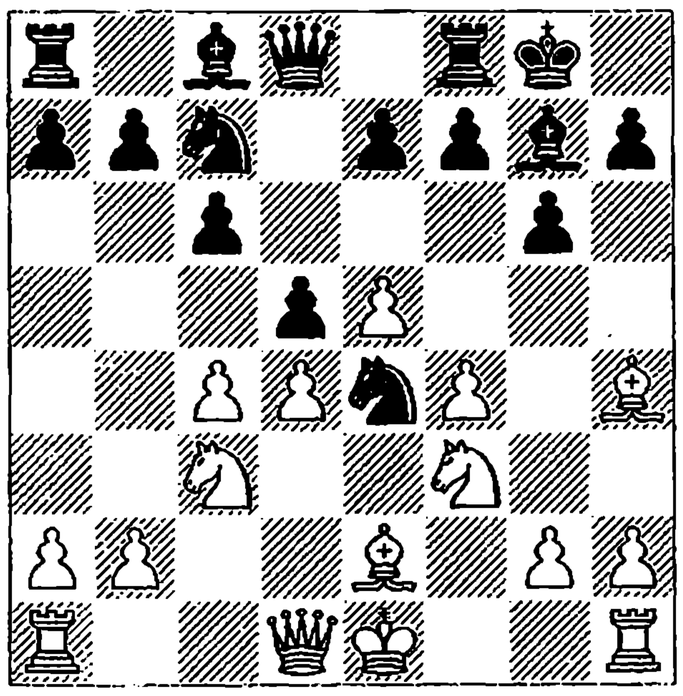


11 ♘xe4

This exchange certainly does not allow White to fight for the advantage. 11 0-0!? leads to more complicated play. Now:

a) 11...♘xc3 12 bxc3 is a bit better for White.

b) 11...♗f5?! 12 ♘xe4! dxe4 (12...♗xe4 is also insufficient due to 13 ♘d2 {or 13 ♘g5} 13...♗f5 14 g4 ♗c8 15 f5) 13 ♘e1 with better chances for White, Grigorov-Spasov, Bulgarian Ch (Sofia) 2004.

c) 11...f6 12 ♘xe4 (12 ♕b3!? is Hazai's suggestion) 12...dxe4 13 ♘e1 ♘e6 14 ♘c2 (14 d5?! cxd5 15 cxd5 is strongly answered by 15...♕b6+!) 14...g5 15 fxg5 fxe5 16 ♖xf8+ ♕xf8 (the risky 16...♗xf8!?, as suggested by Hazai, deserves attention) 17 d5! (much better than 17 dxe5? ♗xe5 18 ♗g3 ♗xb2 19 ♖b1 ♗g7 20 h4 ♘c5, Illescas-Comas Fabrego, Ayamonte 2002) 17...♘f4 18 ♘e3 with an edge for White – Hazai.

d) 11...♘e6 12 g3 f6! (12...h6 13 ♗d3! with the idea 13...g5 14 fxg5 hxg5 15 ♗xe4 dxe4 16 ♘xg5 ♕xd4+ 17 ♕xd4 ♘xd4 18 ♘gxe4 ♗xe5 19 ♗xe7 – Korchnoi; 12...f5 13 cxd5 cxd5 14 ♕b3!) 13 cxd5 cxd5 14 ♕b3 ♘xc3 (14...g5?! is unsuccessful: 15 fxg5 fxg5 16 ♘xe4 gxh4 17 ♘c3 hxg3 18 hxg3 ♘c7 19 ♗d3!, Korchnoi-Xie Jun, Munich (Veterans vs Ladies) 2000) 15 bxc3 b6 16 c4 ♗b7 (Hazai) and it seems that Black has a perfectly playable position.

11...dxe4 12 ♘g5 f6! 13 ♘xe4

13 exf6 exf6 14 ♘xe4 can be answered by 14...♖e8! (14...♘e6 transposes to the game) 15 ♘c3 ♘e6!.

13...♘e6!?

In this tournament I was trying (without success) to score my last GM norm. If Black is satisfied with an equal endgame, then of course 13...fxe5! 14 dxe5 (14 fxe5? ♖f4! with a nice fork) 14...♕xd1+ 15 ♖xd1 ♖xf4 16 ♖d8+ ♖f8 17 ♗xe7 (or 17 ♖xf8+ ♔xf8) 17...♖xd8 18 ♗xd8 ♗xe5 is the choice.

14 exf6!

Stronger than 14 d5 cxd5 15 cxd5 ♘xf4 16 0-0 fxe5! 17 d6 ♗f6!.

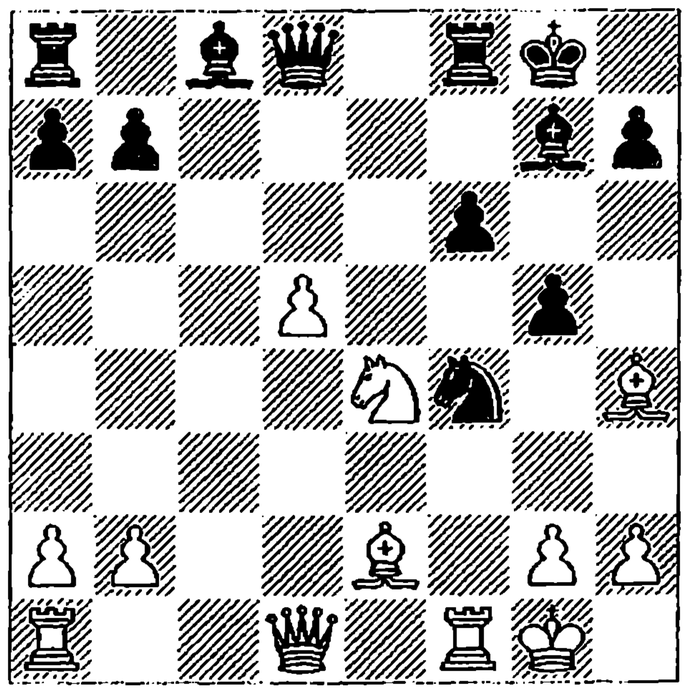
14...exf6 15 d5!

Again, the critical reply.

15...cxd5 16 cxd5 ♘xf4 17 0-0 g5!? *(D)*

Consistently, Black seeks to create winning chances. 17...♘xd5 18 ♗c4 ♗e6 looked frightening to him: White can develop the initiative in various ways and certainly does not risk anything.

Similarly, 17...♘xe2+ 18 ♕xe2 ♕xd5 only gives Black hopes for a draw. White's most ambitious move, 19 ♖ad1 (19 ♘xf6+ ♗xf6 20 ♗xf6 ♗f5! leads to absolute equality), can be answered by 19...♕xa2!? (but not 19...♕e5? 20 ♗xf6! ♖xf6 21 ♖d8+ ♖f8 22 ♖dxf8+ ♗xf8 23 ♘f6+ and White wins).



18 ♗f2?

The most interesting possibility is 18 ♖xf4! gxf4 19 d6, with a complex position where White has sufficient compensation for the exchange. Perhaps I would play 19...♔h8!?, hiding the king.

18 ♗c4!? ♕c7 also leads to complex play. Wang Lei-Ye Jiangchuan, Shanghai 2000 continued 19 ♘d2 ♔h8 20 ♗f2 b6 21 ♖c1 ♗b7 22 ♗g3 ♖ad8 23 ♗xf4 gxf4 and Black's chances were no worse.

18...♖e8! 19 ♘c3

Perhaps when making his 18th move White overlooked that 19 ♗f3? fails to 19...g4. Now the game reaches an endgame with an extra pawn for Black – which, unfortunately, is difficult to convert into a full point. At least, I did not manage.

19...♘xe2+

19...♖xe2 20 ♘xe2 ♗g4 21 ♖e1 ♕d7 would not give anything special after 22 h3! (but not 22 ♕d2? ♗xe2 23 ♖xe2 ♕g4).

20 ♘xe2 ♗g4 21 ♖e1 ♖xe2 22 ♖xe2 ♗xe2 23 ♕xe2 ♕xd5 24 ♖d1 *(D)*

24...♕f7

Perhaps 24...♕xa2!? 25 ♖d7 ♕b1+ or even 25...f5!? was worth trying.

25 ♕g4

The alternative was 25 ♕b5!?.

25...♖e8 26 h4!? gxh4?!

The last chance to maintain some hopes of victory was 26...♕xa2! 27 hxg5 ♕e6.

27 ♖d7! f5

After 27...♕g6 White plays 28 ♕xh4.

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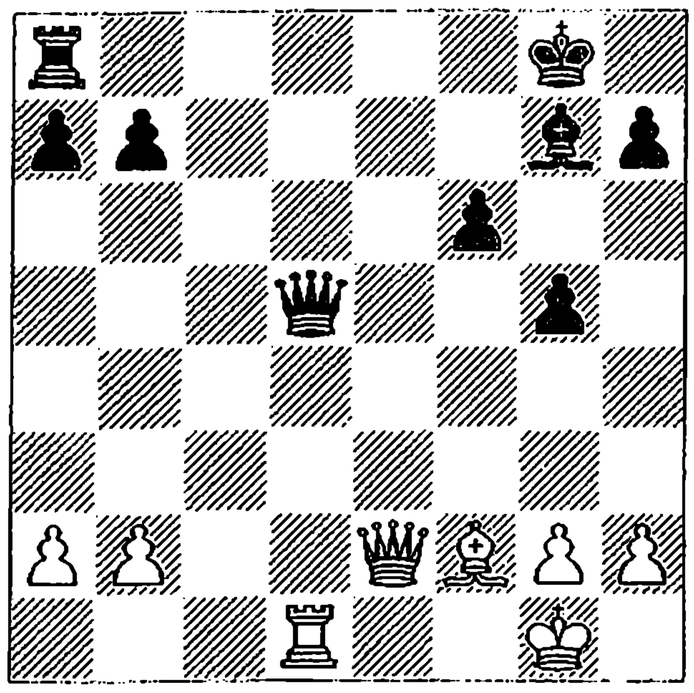

28 ♕a4! ♕e6

Or 28...♕g6 29 ♖xb7 h3 30 ♕b3+ ♔h8 31 ♕xh3. After 28...♖e4 even the simple 29 ♖xf7!? ♖xa4 30 ♖xb7 ♖xa2 31 ♖xa7 ♖xa7 32 ♗xa7 ♗xb2 gives Black no real winning chances: White puts his king on f3 and then what can Black do?

29 ♖xb7 h3 30 ♕b3!?

30 gxh3 ♖c8 31 ♕b3 is also possible.

30...♕xb3 31 ♖xb3 hxg2 32 ♗xa7 ♖e2 33 a4 ♗xb2 34 a5 ♗e5 35 ♖e3! ♖xe3 36 ♗xe3 f4 37 a6 ♗b8 ½-½

The draw was agreed in view of 38 ♗xf4! ♗xf4 39 ♔xg2.

Game 31
Polak – Golubev
Neuchâtel open 1993

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 *(D)*

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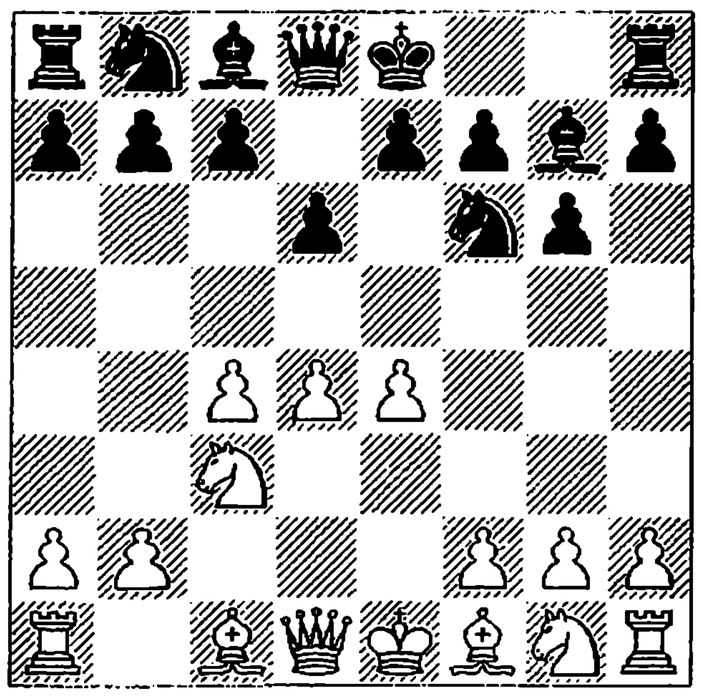

5 ♗e2

5 ♗g5!? is interesting and relatively rare at GM level. Now:

a) 5...0-0 6 ♕d2 (consistent; if White wished to play 6 h3 or 6 ♗e2, then it would be simpler to begin with one of these moves, and not with 5 ♗g5). The only example from my practice shows how Black should *not* react: 6...♘a6?! (6...c5 7 d5 a6, 6...a6 and 6...♘bd7 are all better ideas here) 7 ♗d3! e5 8 d5 c6 (this is a position from Obodchuk-Golubev {see note 'c' to White's 9th move in Game 28} with an extra tempo for White!) 9 ♘ge2 cxd5 (in Aleksandrov-A.Fedorov, Sheki Z 1998 Black did not manage to equalize after 9...♘c5 10 ♗c2 cxd5 11 cxd5 a5 12 0-0 ♗d7 13 f3 b5 14 ♘d1 b4 15 b3 ♗b5 16 ♘b2) 10 ♘xd5! ♘c5 11 ♘ec3 ♗e6 12 ♘xf6+ ♗xf6 13 ♗e3! (White is at least slightly better) 13...♖c8 14 ♗e2 ♗e7 15 0-0 a5 16 f3 ♕b6 17 ♘b5 f5 18 exf5 gxf5 19 ♔h1 f4 20 ♗g1 ♖fd8 21 ♖fd1 d5 22 cxd5 ♖xd5?! 23 ♕c3 ♖xd1 24 ♖xd1 ♗xa2 25 b3 ♗xb3 26 ♗xc5!? (26 ♕xb3+ ♘xb3 27 ♗xb6 a4) 26...♕e6! 27 ♘d6 (27 ♖d6!?) 27...♖c7! 28 ♕xa5 (28 ♘e4 a4!) 28...♗xd1 29 ♗c4?! (29 ♕xc7! ♗xe2 30 ♕b8+! with an advantage for White) 29...♕xc4 30 ♘xc4 ♖xc5 31 ♕a2 ♔g7 32 h3 ½-½ Landa-Golubev, Kremlin Stars PCA rpd 1994.

b) Black can delay castling. The most interesting way to do it is probably 5...h6!? *(D)*, and now:

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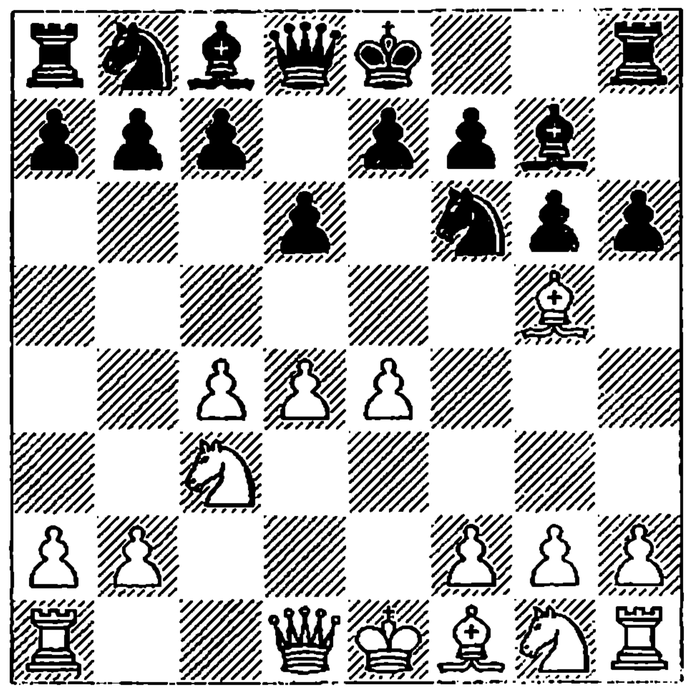


b1) 6 ♗h4 c5 7 d5 and here:

b11) 7...0-0 8 ♗d3 e6 9 dxe6 ♗xe6 10 f4! (10 ♘f3 ♘c6 11 0-0 g5 12 ♗g3 ♘h5 = Ponomariov & Golubev) 10...♘c6 11 ♘ge2 seems to be promising for White.

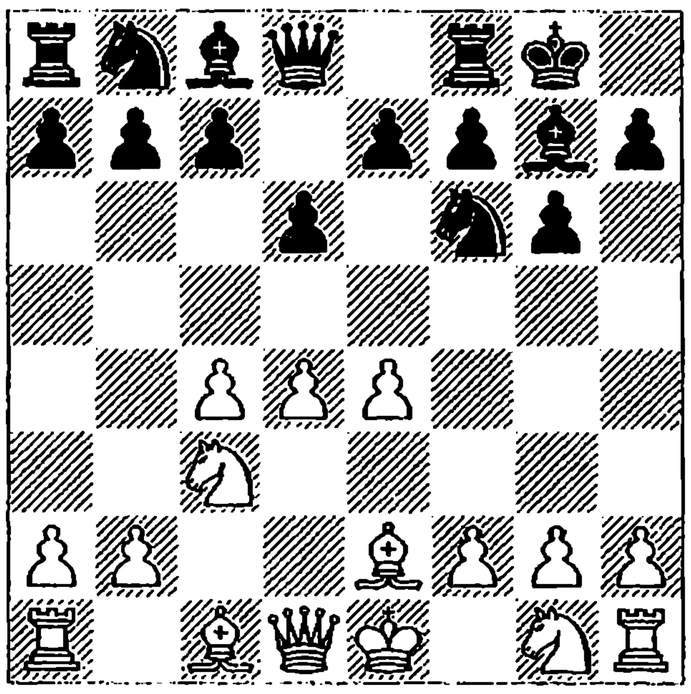
b12) 7...♕a5!? 8 ♗d3?! (after 8 ♕d2 Black can develop counterplay by 8...g5 9 ♗g3 ♘h5 or 8...0-0 9 ♘f3 a6 10 ♗d3 b5) 8...g5! 9 ♗g3 ♘xe4! 10 ♗xe4 ♗xc3+ 11 bxc3 ♕xc3+ 12 ♔f1 f5 13 ♖c1 (13 ♘e2 ♕f6 14 ♗c2 f4 15 h4 ♖f8! was good for Black in Stein-Geller, USSR Cht (Moscow) 1966) 13...♕f6! (better than

13...♕g7 14 h4! gxh4 15 ♕h5+ ♔d8 16 ♖xh4 fxe4 17 ♖xe4 ♘d7 18 ♖e3 ♘f6 19 ♕h4 ♕g5 20 ♖ce1 ♖e8 21 ♘f3 – Ponomariov & Golubev) 14 h4 g4!, Spassky-Fischer, Sveti Stefan/Belgrade (16) 1992.

b2) 6 ♗e3 ♘g4 (6...c5 7 d5 e6 is also playable; then 8 e5!? ♘g4! 9 ♕xg4 exd5 10 ♕f3 d4 11 ♘e4 dxe5 12 ♗d2 occurred in Khenkin-Nataf, French Cht 2002, when, according to Nataf's notes in *Informator 85*, Black can obtain sufficient compensation for a knight by 12...♘a6!? 13 g4 0-0 14 0-0-0 ♕h4!?) 7 ♗c1 e5 8 d5 f5 9 ♗e2 ♘f6 10 exf5 ♗xf5!? (instead of the more common 10...gxf5 11 ♗h5+ ♘xh5 12 ♕xh5+ ♔f8 13 f4) 11 g4 ♗d7 12 ♕c2 e4! gave Black reasonable counterchances in I.Sokolov-Volokitin, Istanbul Ech 2003 because 13 ♘xe4 is answered by 13...0-0 with a serious development advantage.

One more idea with ♗g5, 5 ♘f3 0-0 6 ♗g5, occurs seldom nowadays. Among Black's possibilities is 6...h6 (6...♗g4!?) 7 ♗h4 g5!? 8 ♗g3 ♘h5 9 ♗e2 e6 10 d5 f5 11 ♘d4 ♘xg3 12 hxg3 fxe4 13 ♘xe6 ♗xe6 14 dxe6 ♗xc3+ 15 bxc3 ♕f6 with chances for both sides, Uhlmann-Fischer, Havana OL 1966.

5...0-0 *(D)*



6 ♗g5

Apart from the Averbakh, White can of course also reach a Classical System with 6 ♘f3. Here I shall mention two rare moves:

a) 6 g4?! a6! (preparing 7...c5 8 d5 b5) 7 a4 (7 g5 ♘fd7! 8 ♗e3 c5 9 d5 b5 10 ♘f3 ♘b6 11 cxb5 axb5 12 ♗xb5 ♗a6 with excellent compensation for the pawn, Hort-Lanka, Manila OL 1992) 7...e5!? 8 d5 a5 (Lanka) 9 h4 ♘a6 10 h5 ♘c5 11 f3 c6 12 ♗e3 ♕b6 with counterplay (Ponomariov & Golubev).

b) 6 ♗e3!? and now:

b1) 6...e5 7 d5 (7 ♘f3! transposes to the Classical System with 7 ♗e3) 7...♘a6 (7...♘e8 8 ♘f3!? f5 9 exf5 gxf5 10 g3 Onishchuk) and here 8 ♘f3 (8 g4!? or 8 h4!? can be met by 8...♘c5 9 f3 a5) transposes to 5 ♘f3 0-0 6 ♗e2 e5 7 ♗e3 ♘a6 8 d5, which is not the most dangerous line for Black.

b2) 6...c5 7 d5 e6!? (7...b5?! 8 cxb5 a6 9 a4 ♕a5 10 ♗d2! transposes to Kasparov-Spassky in the note to Black's 7th move in Game 27) 8 dxe6! (8 ♘f3 exd5 9 cxd5 ♗f5!? 10 0-0 ♘e4 Serper-Filippov, Novgorod open 1995) 8...♗xe6 9 ♘f3 ♘c6 10 0-0 ♘g4 11 ♗g5 f6 12 ♗h4 ♘ge5 13 ♘d2 g5 14 ♗g3 ♘d4 15 ♘d5 f5 with sufficient counterplay, Taimanov-Suetin, Leningrad-Byelorussia 1964.

6...♘a6

Our focus here is on the old-fashioned move 6...♘bd7, to which our main game transposes on move 8. Here are a few examples of 6...♘bd7 7 ♕d2:

a) 7...a6 8 f4? (the critical line, where it is not easy for Black to equalize completely, is 8 ♘f3! ♖b8, preparing ...b5) 8...c5 9 d5 b5! 10 cxb5 ♕a5 11 b6 ♘xb6 12 ♘f3 ♖b8 13 0-0 ♘a4 and Black was already better in Ramma-Golubev, USSR Army Cht (Riga) 1988.

b) 7...c6 8 ♘f3! e5 (8...d5 is slightly better for White also; e.g., 9 exd5 cxd5 10 0-0 a6 11 ♘e5!, Gelfand-Svidler, Groningen 1996) 9 0-0 exd4 10 ♘xd4 ♘c5 11 ♕f4! ♕e7 12 ♖ad1 and Black still has some problems as 12...♘cxe4?! (12...♕e5) 13 ♘xe4 ♕xe4 14 ♕xd6 ♘d7 15 ♗f3 ♕e5 16 ♗f4 gives White the initiative. Polugaevsky-Geller, Amsterdam IBM 1970.

c) 7...e5 8 ♘f3 (8 d5 ♘c5 transposes to the main game) 8...♖e8 9 0-0 exd4 10 ♘xd4 h6 11 ♗xh6 ♘xe4 12 ♘xe4 ♗xh6 13 ♕xh6 ♖xe4 14 ♕d2 (White is somewhat better) 14...♕f6 15 ♘b5 (15 ♖ad1! is probably more to the point) 15...c6 16 ♘c3 ♖d4 17 ♕e3 ♕e5 18 ♖ad1 ♖xd1 19 ♖xd1 ♘b6 20 ♕xe5 dxe5 21 ♖d8+ ♔g7 22 ♘e4 ♗e6 23 ♖xa8 ♘xa8 24 ♘c5 ♗c8 25 b4 ♘c7 and Black happily equalized in M.Stettler-Golubev, Odessa Ch sf 1983. Since it was my first international game (my opponent was an East German player who was staying temporarily in Odessa), I was probably not sufficiently confident and managed to lose this endgame – but won the tournament in the end

7 ♕d2 e5 8 d5 ♘c5

We have already considered 8...c6! (Game 28, Plotnikov-Golubev) and 8...♕e8.

9 f3 h6 10 ♗e3!

Not 10 ♗xh6? because of 10...♘fxe4! 11 fxe4 ♕h4+.

10...♘h5!? *(D)*

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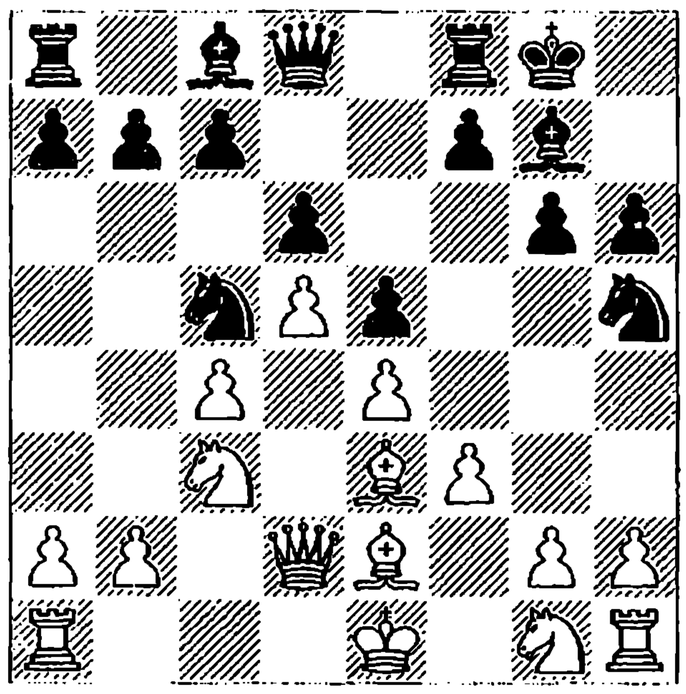

This move attracted attention after a few games by Yermolinsky from the mid-1980s. Black prepares to meet g4 with ...♘f4.

11 b4

11 ♗xh6? is still wrong due to 11...♕h4+.

11 0-0-0 ♔h7, and in Mendelson-Golubev, Groningen open 1993 White made the same mistake as in the main game: he combined 0-0-0 and b4 without having a strong position on the kingside: 12 b4?! ♘d7 13 ♗d3 a5 14 a3 axb4 15 axb4 ♘f4 16 ♗c2 ♘b6 17 ♗xb6 cxb6 18 g3 ♘h5 19 ♘ge2 ♗d7 20 ♔b2 ♕c7 21 ♗d3 f5 22 ♖hf1 b5! 23 ♘xb5 ♗xb5 24 cxb5 fxe4 25 fxe4 ♕b6 26 ♖a1 ♘f6 (or 26...♖xa1 27 ♖xa1 ♘f6) 27 ♖xa8 ♖xa8 28 ♖a1 ♖f8 29 ♘c3 ♕d4 30 ♔b3 ♘xe4 31 ♘xe4 ♕xa1 32 ♘xd6 e4 33 ♗xe4 ♕e5 0-1. Instead, 12 g3! is correct, as played by Averbakh himself.

11 ♗d1! (preparing ♘ge2 and ♗c2) also poses Black some problems. The tactical justification is that after 11...♘f4 12 ♗c2 ♕g5? 13 0-0-0! ♕xg2 14 ♗xf4! ♕xh1 15 ♗e3! the black queen is trapped.

11...♘d7 12 0-0-0?! a5

12...♔h7 would transpose to Mendelson-Golubev in the previous note, but Black refuses to defend the h6-pawn and decides to develop his initiative as quickly as possible.

13 a3 axb4 14 axb4 ♘b6!? 15 g3?

15 ♗xh6!? ♗xh6 16 ♕xh6 ♘f4 17 ♗f1 was worth trying – at least White then would have a pawn for his suffering.

15...♗d7 16 ♔b2 ♘a4+ 17 ♘xa4 ♖xa4 18 ♖a1 ♖xa1 19 ♔xa1 f5 20 ♔b2

20 ♗xh6 is met by the simple 20...♕a8+ 21 ♔b2 ♗xh6 22 ♕xh6 ♕a4 23 ♕xg6+ ♘g7 with a decisive attack.

20...fxe4 21 fxe4 ♘f6 22 ♗f3 *(D)*

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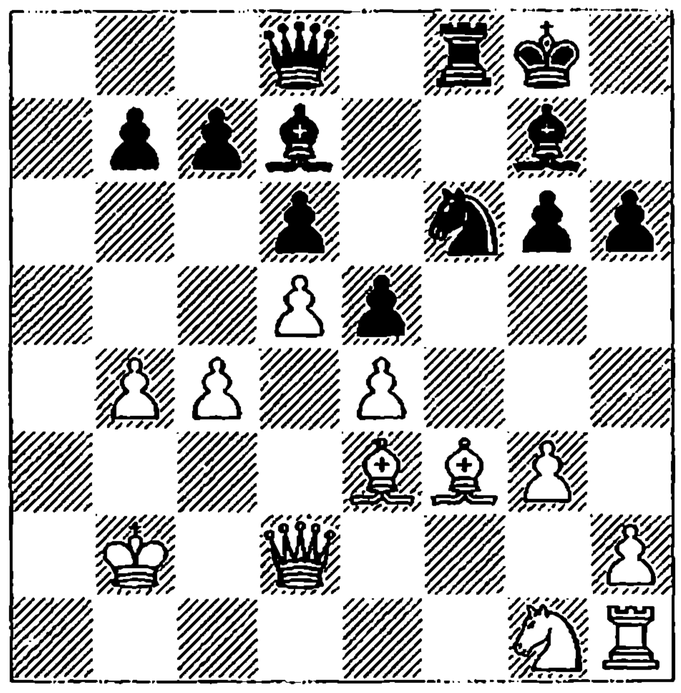


22...♔h7!

Finally, Black defends the h6-pawn. But the main idea of the move is to prevent 23 ♘e2?, which would be answered by 23...♘xd5, when 24 ♕xd5 is not check any more. It becomes difficult for White to find useful moves, while Black is preparing his decisive assault.

23 ♕d3 ♕a8 24 h3 b5!

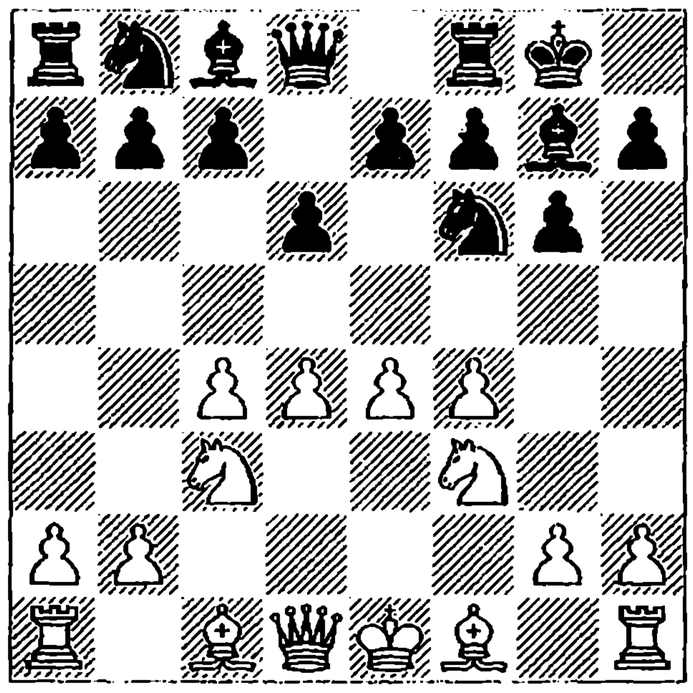
Now White's centre collapses.

25 cxb5 ♘xd5 26 ♕xd5 ♕xd5 27 exd5 e4+ 28 ♔b3 exf3 29 ♖h2 ♗xb5 30 ♖f2 ♖f5 31 ♘xf3 ♖xd5 32 ♖d2 ♖xd2 33 ♘xd2 g5 34 ♗a7 ♗e5 35 ♗b8 d5 36 g4 ♗e2 37 ♔a4 d4 38 b5 ♗f4 39 ♘b3 d3 0-1

In fairness to my opponent, a strong player (now a GM), it must be added that in Neuchâtel two games per day were played, which often has a dramatic impact on the quality of the games. From another point of view, I was fortunate enough to win two 'classical' games (against Polak and Cebalo) on my birthday. A rare event!

8 The Four Pawns Attack

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 5 f4 0-0 6 ♘f3 *(D)*



B

The Four Pawns Attack is certainly a special and atypical response to the King's Indian. While in other lines White primarily tries to build a solid position while preserving some space advantage, here he simply pushes his pawns forward, aiming to develop an initiative at any price and ignoring the possible risk that this strategy involves. Such an approach to the opening is more in the spirit of 1 e4 players – that is a possible explanation of why the Four Pawns Attack is used by White relatively rarely. As in the Averbakh Variation, Black's main choice here lies between 6...c5 and 6...♘a6.

Before going into the details, I shall note that White can begin with 5 f4 0-0 6 ♗e2 (or 5 ♗e2 0-0 6 f4), and only then play ♘f3. However, this move-order has no real advantages for White.

Game 32
Vaïsser – Golubev
Biel open 1995

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 5 f4

GM Anatoli Vaïsser is probably the greatest ever expert in the Four Pawns Attack. (Later, in 1997 he authored a remarkably interesting book about his beloved system.) I can't say I was unafraid to defend the black side against him but I have hardly ever played anything other than the King's Indian, so there was no choice. Although I had a clearly lost position in our game, everything ended well: I escaped with a draw, later achieved my second GM norm in that tournament, and, no less important, now have something to put in the Four Pawns Attack section of this book. Curiously, no one apart from Vaïsser played 5 f4 against me in a serious game in the period between 1987 and 2003!

5...0-0 6 ♘f3 ♘a6!?

This curious-looking move was introduced into serious practice by Russian IM Igor Belov in 1987. Gradually it proved to be fully playable. In the 1980s I used to play the somewhat more principled 6...c5, and I feel that it is necessary to provide a brief overview of this move here:

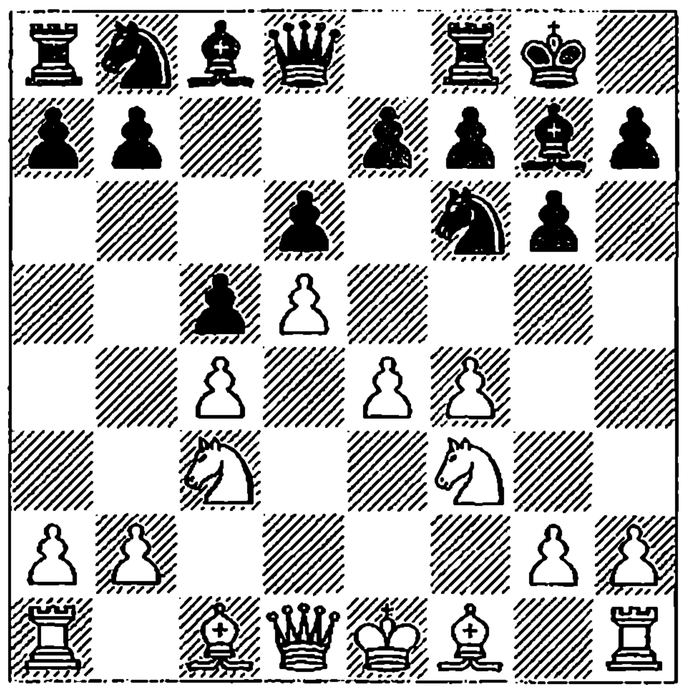
a) 7 ♗e2!? cxd4 8 ♘xd4 is an almost forgotten old line. Then 8...♘c6 9 ♗e3 transposes to a Sicilian Maroczy with an early f4 for White. Even here, it is not easy for Black to equalize quickly: 9...♗g4!? 10 ♘xc6 ♗xe2 11 ♘xd8 ♗xd1 12 ♖xd1 ♖fxd8 13 ♔e2 leaves White slightly better, because 13...♖dc8 is answered by 14 c5! ♘g4 15 cxd6 ♘xe3 16 ♔xe3 exd6 17 ♘d5 ♔f8 18 ♖d2, as in Marjanović-Iordachescu, Bucharest (Ciocaltea mem) 2000. Instead, Stein's move 8...♘a6!? is noteworthy. 9 ♗e3 ♘c5 10 ♗f3, then 10...♘fd7!? with the idea of 11...e5, as in Bisguier-R.Byrne, Lincoln 1969.

b) The most important sideline here is considered to be 7 dxc5!? ♕a5 8 ♗d3 ♕xc5 9 ♕e2 ♗g4 10 ♗e3, when 10...♗xf3!? looks like an interesting alternative to the main line 10...♕a5 11 0-0 ♘c6 12 ♖ac1 ♘d7 13 ♕f2 ♗xf3 14 gxf3.

c) 7 d5 *(D)* and now:

c1) 7...a6 8 a4 and here 8...e5!? 9 fxe5 ♘g4 (not 9...dxe5?!, when Black is definitely worse) with the idea of 10 exd6 f5! was invented by

B



Greek players in the second half of the 1990s. Then 11 ♗d3 ♗xc3+ 12 bxc3 fxe4 13 ♗xe4 ♖e8 seems not to be bad for Black.

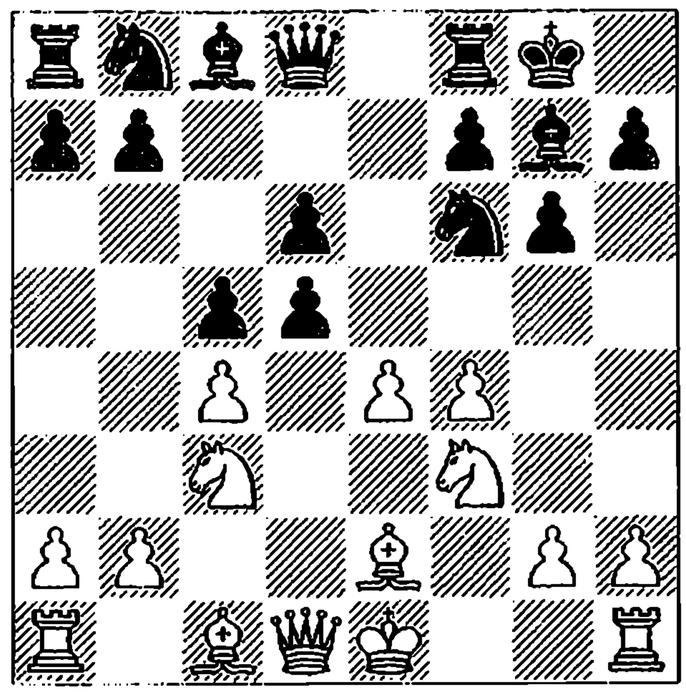
c2) 7...b5 8 cxb5 a6, in the spirit of the Benko Gambit, is a bit more justified here than in the Averbakh Variation, but nevertheless Black seems to have problems to solve: 9 a4 axb5 (9...e6!? is interesting, but then Black has to find a way to neutralize Piskov's idea 10 ♗e2 axb5 11 ♗xb5 exd5 12 e5! and then, for example, 12...♘e8 13 ♘xd5 ♗b7 14 ♗c4 ♘c6 15 ♗e3 dxe5 16 ♗xc5 ♘d6 17 ♘e7+ ♘xe7 18 ♕xd6) 10 ♗xb5 and here:

c21) 10...♘a6 is a somewhat unsuccessful idea, which I have tried twice: 11 0-0 ♘c7 (11...♘b4 12 e5!) 12 ♗c6 ♖b8 13 e5 ♘fe8 14 ♖e1 ♘a6 15 ♘g5 (or 15 ♘b5 ♘b4 16 ♗xe8 ♖xe8 17 exd6 ♗b7 18 ♘c7 ♕xd6 19 ♘xe8 ♖xe8 and Black's compensation for the exchange does not seem fully sufficient, Belin-Golubev, Odessa 1987) 15...♘ec7?! 16 e6! fxe6 17 dxe6 ♘b4 (17...♖f5 18 ♘f7 ♕f8 is answered by 19 ♘xd6! ♗d4+ 20 ♔h1 exd6 21 e7) 18 ♘f7 ♖xf7 19 exf7+ ♔xf7 20 ♗e4 d5 21 ♗b1 and although Black is active, his compensation for the exchange is under question, Kaplun-Golubev, Ukrainian Ch sf (Lutsk) 1986.

c22) The normal line is 10...♗a6 11 ♗d2 ♗xb5 12 axb5 ♖xa1 13 ♕xa1 ♘bd7 (an improvement over 13...♕b6 14 0-0 ♘bd7 15 ♕e1! ♕b7 {Lautier-Shirov, Belgrade 1997} 16 ♕h4! Lautier) 14 0-0 ♘b6. The games played so far do not convince me that Black has full equality in this critical position.

c3) 7...e6 8 ♗e2 (the rare 8 e5 dxe5 9 fxe5 ♘g4 10 ♗g5 ♕a5 is double-edged; 8 dxe6!? is an important deviation for White – Black must then decide whether he should capture on e6 with bishop or pawn: Christiansen-Kasparov, Moscow IZ 1982 continued 8...fxe6 9 ♗d3 ♘c6 10 0-0 ♘d4! 11 ♘g5 e5 12 f5 h6 13 ♘h3 gxf5 14 exf5 b5!, and this still seems to be a good recipe for Black) 8...exd5 *(D)* and White faces an important choice:

W



c31) 9 e5?! is a slightly over-optimistic try, but Black needs to know how to react. 9...♘g4?! (9...♘e4! 10 cxd5 ♘xc3 11 bxc3 ♘d7! has scored extremely well for Black so far) 10 cxd5 dxe5 11 h3 e4 12 hxg4! exf3 13 gxf3 ♖e8 14 f5 b6 (14...♕b6 15 ♗h6 ♕xb2 16 ♗xg7 ♔xg7, Vaïsser-Kasparov, Moscow tt 1981, and here Kasparov recommends 17 ♖c1!) and now the strongest seems to be 15 ♘e4! (15 ♗h6? ♗xc3+ 16 bxc3 ♗a6; 15 ♔f1 gxf5 16 ♗h6 fxg4 17 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 18 ♘e4 ♗f5 19 ♕d2 and now 19...♗g6!? instead of 19...♖xe4 20 fxe4 ♗xe4 21 ♕h6+ ♔h8, Oslon-Golubev, Ukrainian jr Ch (Alexandria) 1984, when 22 ♗xg4! gives White hope for an advantage) 15...gxf5 16 gxf5 ♗xf5 17 ♗g5 ♕d7 18 ♕d2! with a dangerous attack for White, Guidi-Marletta, Italian corr. Ch 1982-4.

c32) 9 exd5 is of course playable, but not especially threatening for Black, who can obtain decent play in various ways:

c321) After 9...a6 White can be advised to play 10 a4, avoiding 10 0-0 b5!? 11 cxb5 axb5 12 ♗xb5 ♘a6 13 ♖e1 ♘c7 14 ♗c4 ♖b8 15 a3 ♖e8! with compensation for Black, Bagaturov-Shirov, Frunze 1989.

c322) 9...♘h5!? 10 0-0 ♗xc3 11 bxc3 f5!? is considered to be solid for Black, but to my mind he is a bit too passive there: after the transfer of the c1-bishop to h4 White tends to be slightly better.

c323) 9...♗f5 10 0-0 ♖e8 11 ♗d3 and now 11...♕d7! gives Black fully acceptable play, as

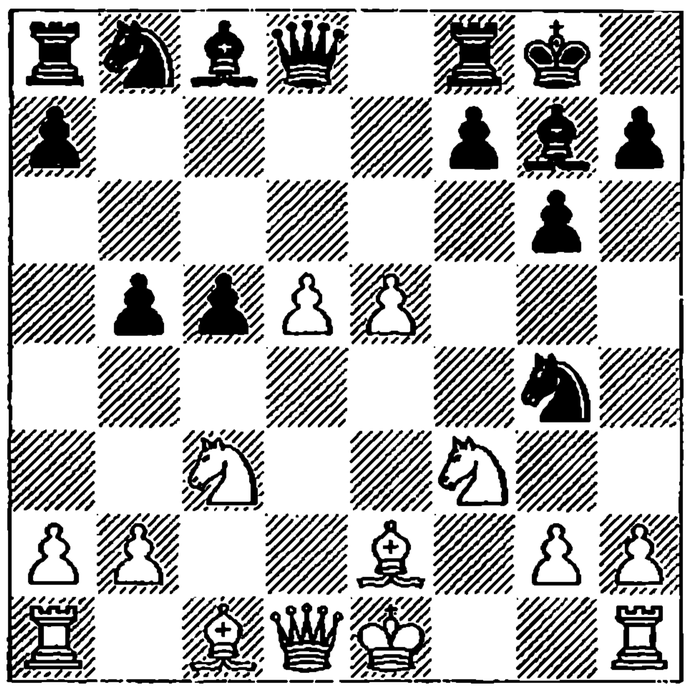
proven by practice. Instead, the natural-looking 11...♘e4?! allows White to develop a dangerous attack by 12 ♘xe4 ♗xe4 13 ♗xe4 ♖xe4 14 ♘g5! ♖xc4 15 ♕d3 ♖d4 16 ♕h3 h6 17 ♘xf7!, etc.

c33) 9 cxd5 transposes to a Modern Benoni, but in fact the position arises much more often via the King's Indian move-order. Black has three major possibilities:

c331) 9...♖e8 10 e5 dxe5 11 fxe5 ♘g4 is often considered a critical line. In fact it is very dangerous for Black; e.g., 12 ♗g5 ♕b6 13 ♕d2!? (the most popular continuation is 13 0-0 ♘xe5 with a mass of crazy variations) 13...♘xe5 14 0-0-0 ♗f5 15 ♘xe5 ♗xe5 16 ♖he1 (Blokh-K.Schneider, corr. 1989) 16...f6!? 17 ♗f4 and White has the initiative for the pawn.

c332) 9...b5!? 10 e5 dxe5 11 fxe5 ♘g4 *(D)* is probably no less crazy and dangerous for Black, but is at least less well-known.

W



Here are three examples from my early games:

c3321) 12 ♗f4 ♘d7 13 0-0 (after 13 e6 Black should play 13...♘b6 rather than the risky 13...fxe6 14 dxe6 ♖xf4 15 ♕d5! ♔h8 16 ♕xa8 ♘b6, Keres-Spassky, Riga Ct (10) 1965) 13...b4!? 14 ♗g5 ♕b6 15 ♘a4 ♕b8 16 e6? (critical is 16 d6 ♗b7) 16...fxe6 17 d6 (17 dxe6? ♖xf3) 17...♗b7 18 ♗c4 ♗xf3 19 ♗xe6+ ♔h8 20 gxf3 ♗d4+ 21 ♔g2 ♘gf6 favoured Black in Piatronis-Golubev, Izhevsk jr 1987.

c3322) 12 0-0 ♘xe5 13 ♘xb5 ♗b7 14 ♗f4 ♘bd7 15 ♘d6 (15 ♘xe5! ♘xe5 16 ♘c3 seems to be slightly better for White) 15...♘xf3+ 16 ♖xf3?! (16 ♗xf3 ♗a6 with sufficient counterplay) 16...♗d4+ 17 ♗e3 ♘e5 18 ♗xd4 ♘xf3+ 19 ♗xf3 ♕xd6 20 ♗c3 and Black was slightly better in Peresypkin-Golubev, Ternopol 1987.

c3323) 12 ♗g5 ♕b6 13 0-0 c4+ 14 ♔h1 b4!? (14...♘d7 can hardly equalize: 15 e6 fxe6 16 dxe6 ♘df6 17 e7 ♖e8 18 ♕d4!, Kaidanov-Gleizerov, Smolensk 1986; or 14...♘f2+?! 15 ♖xf2 ♕xf2 16 ♘xb5!?) 15 ♘e4 ♘d7 16 h5 ♘gxe5 17 ♗e7 ♖c8 18 d6 ♗b7 19 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 20 ♘f6+ ♗xf6 21 ♗xf6 ♖ad8!? 22 ♗xe5 ♖xd6 23 ♗xc4 ♖g5 24 ♖xf7 ♗xg2+ 25 ♔h2 ♕d6+ and Black won in Onushko-Golubev, Ukrainian jr Ch (Lutsk) 1987.

c333) Lately Black has been doing well with the much calmer line 9...♗g4! 10 0-0 ♘bd7 11 ♖e1 and now, as recommended in Watson's book, *The Gambit Guide to the Modern Benoni*, 11...♘e8! (instead of the customary 11...♖e8 12 h3 ♗xf3 13 ♗xf3) 12 ♗xe2 ♗xe2 13 ♖xe2 a6 (or 13...♘c7 14 a4 a6) 14 a4 ♘c7 15 ♕d3 (15 e5 dxe5 16 d6 ♘e6 17 ♘xe6 fxe6 18 ♕b3 exf4 19 ♖xe6 ♕h4!? 20 g3 ♕h3 21 ♗xf4 ♔h8 with excellent counterplay, Gerard-Glek, French Cht 2003) 15...h6 (the immediate 15...b5 16 axb5 axb5 17 ♖xa8 ♕xa8 allows 18 ♘xh7 or 18 ♘xb5 ♕a6 19 ♕h3!) 16 ♘f3 b5 17 e5 (now 17 axb5 axb5 18 ♖xa8 ♕xa8 19 ♘xb5? ♕a6 loses a knight for White) 17...c4 18 ♕c2 ♘c5! gives Black very good play, Gerard-Voicu, Bucharest 2002 (less clear is 18...dxe5 19 d6!? ♘e6 20 fxe5, as in Vaïsser-Nataf, Val d'Isère 2004).

Now we return to 6...♘a6 *(D)*.

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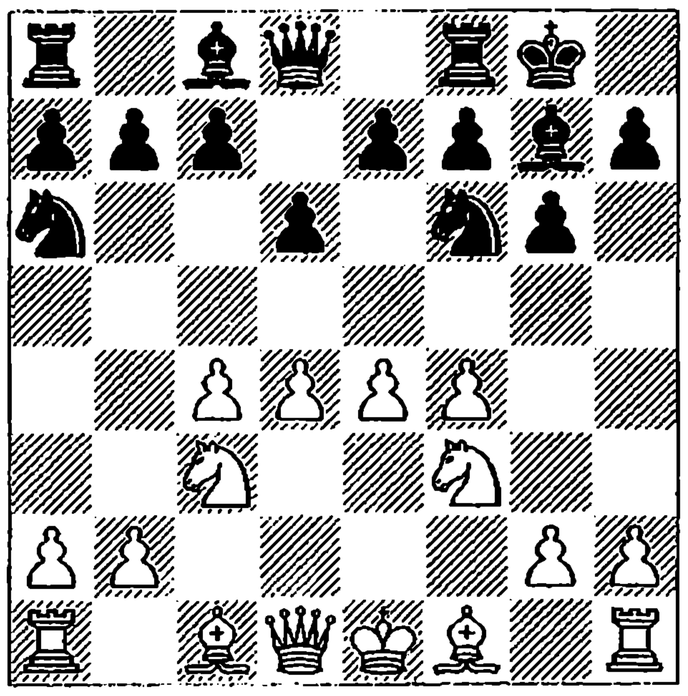


7 e5!?

The more important and popular moves 7 ♗e2 and 7 ♗d3 are considered in the next game.

7...♘d7

Several games continued 7...♘e8 8 h3!? c5 9 d5, when it is not so easy for Black to attack White's pawn-centre.

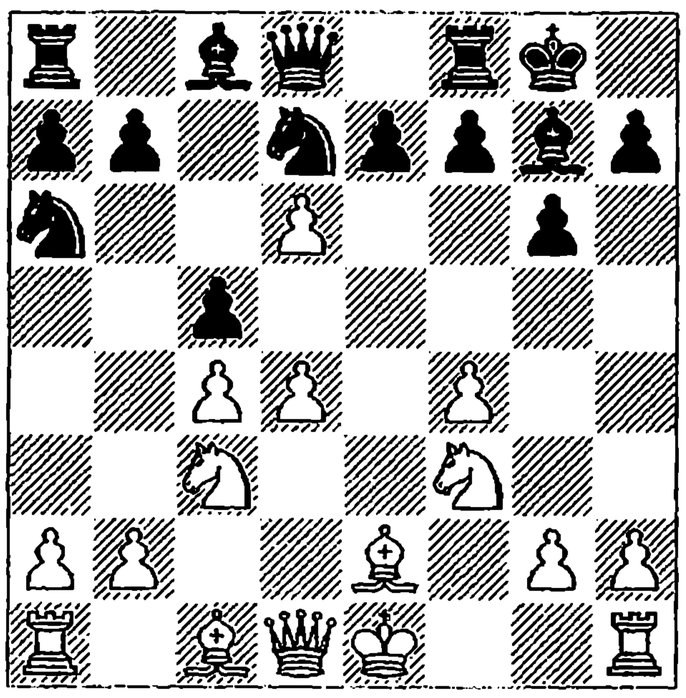
8 ♗e2

It seems too risky for White to delay the development of his kingside any further. For example, 8 h4 dxe5 (even more principled is 8...c5!? 9 d5 dxe5 10 h5 ♕a5!?, Mil.Orsag-Dolezel, corr. 1999) 9 fxe5 c5 10 ♗f4 cxd4 11 ♕xd4 ♘b4 12 ♖c1 (12 0-0-0 can be met by 12...♕a5 13 a3 ♘c5! 14 ♕e3 ♘b3+ 15 ♔b1 ♗f5+ 16 ♘e4 ♖ad8!, when 17 ♗e2 ♘c5 18 axb4 ♕xb4 19 ♘fg5 f6 20 g4 ♘a4! 21 ♕c1 fxg5 22 gxf5 gxf4 favours Black) 12...♕a5 13 ♕e3 (Vaïsser-Desbonnes, French Cht 1998) 13...♘c6!? 14 e6 ♘f6 15 exf7+ ♖xf7 and Black's chances are preferable. 8 ♕e2 c5! 9 d5 ♘b6 (as in Glek-A.Kuzmin, Podolsk tt 1990) is also promising for Black, as he is ready to counterattack in the centre.

8...c5

It is tempting for Black to undermine White's centre in the spirit of the famous game Letelier-Fischer, Leipzig OL 1960 (1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 0-0 5 e5 ♘e8 6 f4 d6 7 ♗e3 c5 8 dxc5 ♘c6 9 cxd6 exd6 10 ♘e4 ♗f5 11 ♘g3 ♗e6 12 ♘f3 ♕c7 13 ♕b1 dxe5 14 f5 e4 15 fxe6 exf3 16 gxf3 f5 17 f4 ♘f6 18 ♗e2 ♖fe8 19 ♔f2 ♖xe6 20 ♖e1 ♖ae8 21 ♗f3 ♖xe3 22 ♖xe3 ♖xe3 23 ♔xe3 ♕xf4+ 0-1). However, 8...dxe5!? 9 dxe5 f6! (9...♘dc5 10 ♗e3!) 10 0-0 fxe5 looks like a simpler route to equality: 11 ♕d5+ (11 ♘g5 ♘b6!?) 11...e6! 12 ♕xe6+ ♔h8 13 ♘g5 ♘dc5 and White is forced to continue 14 ♕d5 (since 14 ♘f7+? ♖xf7 15 ♕xf7 ♗e6 leaves the queen trapped) with roughly balanced chances.

9 exd6! *(D)*



9...exd6

9...cxd4 is answered by 10 ♘xd4! (10 dxe7? ♕xe7 11 ♘xd4 ♘b6 favours Black) 10...♘b6 11 0-0! ♕xd6 12 ♗e3 as in Vokač-Kovalev, Ostrava 1993, with an initiative for White: both black knights are placed awkwardly.

10 d5

The alternative is 10 0-0 ♘b6!? (10...♘f6!? 11 d5 transposes to a 6...c5/9 exd5 line where an early ...♘a6 is playable, even if not the best idea for Black; 10...cxd4 11 ♘xd4 ♕b6 12 ♗e3 looks promising for White; e.g., 12...♖e8 13 ♘d5 ♕xb2 14 ♘c2! and the black queen is in danger, while 14...♘dc5 15 ♗c1 ♕xc2 16 ♕xc2 ♗f5 can hardly give him sufficient compensation because the white knight on d5 is strong) 11 d5 ♗f5!? (Belanoff-Chopin, IECG e-mail 2002) and it is not easy for White to neutralize Black's counterplay; e.g., 12 a3 (preventing ...♘b4) 12...♖e8 13 ♗d3 ♗xc3 14 bxc3 ♕f6.

10...♘c7

It is hard to choose between a number of playable options: 10...♗xc3+!? 11 bxc3 f5 was suggested by Vaïsser, but I would hesitate to exchange the dark-squared bishop, even if the a1-h8 diagonal is blocked and cannot be used by White. 10...♘f6 and 10...♘b6 are likely to transpose to lines in the previous note.

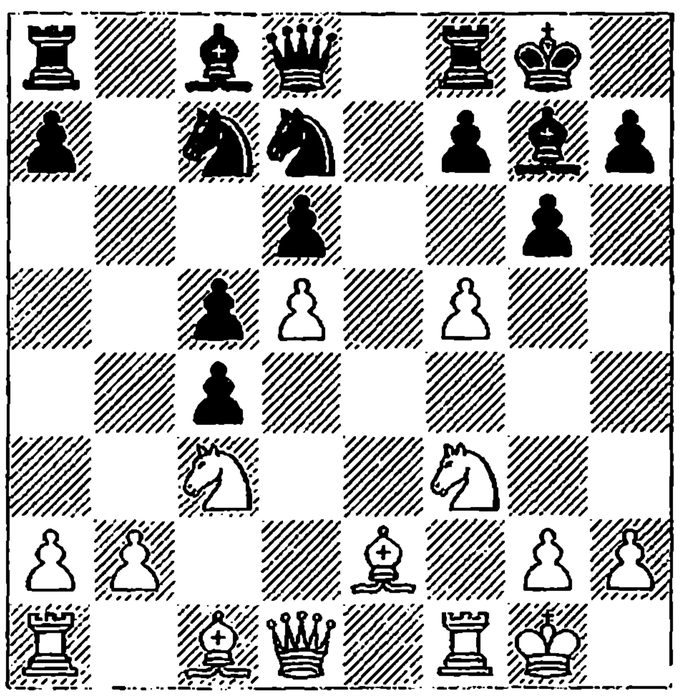
11 0-0 b5!?

11...♗xc3 12 bxc3 f5 is, of course, possible again. Instead, Black is trying to sacrifice a pawn...

12 f5!

But White does not accept the offer. After 12 cxb5 not only the standard 12...a6 but also 12...♘b6!? (planning to attack the d5-pawn) is possible.

12...bxc4 *(D)*



A complicated, double-edged position has arisen. I imagine that Black should have sufficient resources to maintain the dynamic equilibrium.

13 fxg6

The principal alternative is 13 ♗g5!? f6 (13...♘f6 14 fxg6 fxg6 transposes to the game) 14 ♗f4 and then, for example, 14...♘b6 15 fxg6 hxg6 16 a4 a5 with complex play, in which White has compensation for the pawn.

13...fxg6

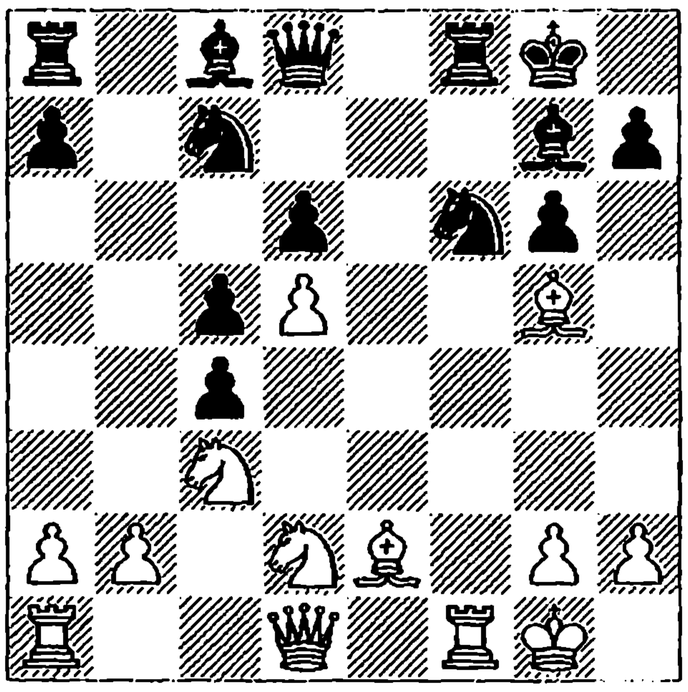
13...hxg6 14 ♗g5!? f6 15 ♗f4 ♘b6 transposes to a position from the previous note.

14 ♗g5 ♘f6

A playable option is 14...♕e8!? (Glek) 15 ♗xc4 and now 15...♘b6 16 ♖e1 ♕d7 17 ♖e7 ♕g4 or 15...♖b8!?.

15 ♘d2! *(D)*

B



Planning to capture on c4 with the knight, and setting a strategic problem for Black that I did not manage to solve.

15...h6?!

15...♗f5 16 ♘xc4 ♕d7, activating the pieces, looks reasonable, but then White has 17 ♘e3! (not 17 ♗xf6? ♗xf6 18 g4 ♗xc3! 19 bxc3 ♗e4) 17...♘e4 18 ♘xf5 gxf5 (or 18...♘xc3?! 19 ♘e7+! {Vaïsser} 19...♕xe7 20 ♗xe7 ♘xd1 21 ♗xf8 ♗d4+ 22 ♔h1 ♘e3 23 ♗xd6 ♘cxd5 and even 24 ♖fc1!? ♗xb2 25 ♗xc5 ♗xa1 26 ♖xa1 is very unpleasant for Black) 19 ♘xe4 fxe4 20 ♕c2 and, although things are complex, it is hard to trust Black's position: the future of the c7-knight is uncertain.

Black's best idea is probably 15...♕d7!? 16 ♘xc4 (or 16 ♗xc4 ♗b7!?) 16...♗a6 with decent play.

16 ♗h4 a6 17 a4!?

Preventing ...♘b5, which would have been my answer to 17 ♗xc4.

17...g5 18 ♗g3 ♘fxd5?

A logical continuation of Black's play – and at the same time, a losing mistake. Fortunately for me, White had too many attractive possibilities on the following moves, which, as is often the case, proved a practical problem for him.

19 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 20 ♗xc4 ♖xf1+

20...♗e6 21 ♕b3 ♖b8 22 ♖xf8+ ♕xf8 (or 22...♔xf8 23 ♕f3+!) 23 ♗xd5 ♗d4+ 24 ♔h1 ♖xb3 25 ♗xe6+ with a large advantage for White.

21 ♘xf1

Even stronger than 21 ♕xf1 ♗e6 22 ♗f7 23 ♘e4.

21...♗e6 22 ♗xd5?!

Much better is 22 ♔h1! ♗d4 23 ♕f3 (or 23...♘f4) 24 ♗xe6+ ♘xe6 25 ♕d5 ♖e1 ♗e5 and here both 27 ♘e3! and 27 ♘d1 should win for White.

22...♗d4+ 23 ♗f2

23 ♕xd4!? cxd4 24 ♗xe6+ ♔g7 25 ♖d1 ♖b8 26 ♗f2 (Vaïsser) would also have preserved a serious edge.

23...♗xd5 24 ♗xd4 cxd4 25 ♕xd4

White has an obvious advantage, but it is not so easy to achieve victory.

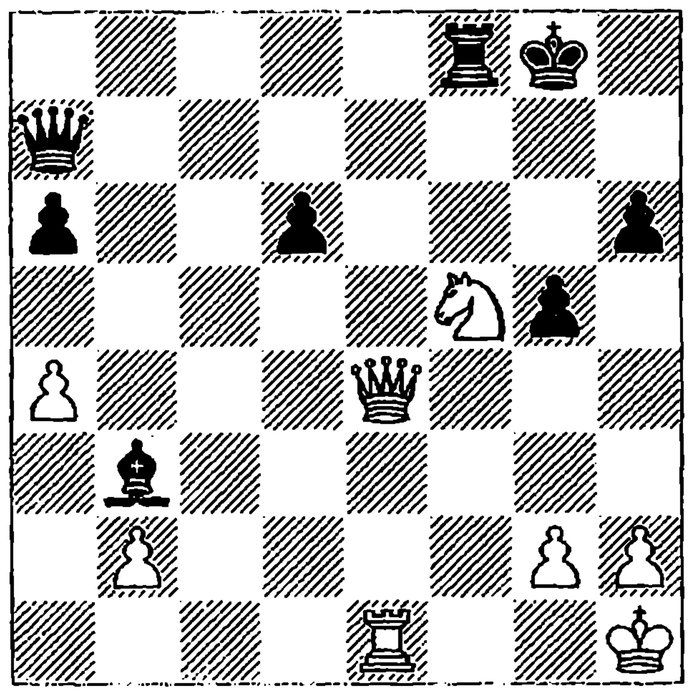
25...♗e6 26 ♖e1 ♕e7!? 27 ♘g3 ♖f8 28 ♕e4?!

White misses the continuation that is most unpleasant for Black: 28 ♕e3! ♖f6 (28...♖e8 29 ♕b6!) 29 ♘h5 ♖g6 30 ♕b6! (Vaïsser).

28...♕a7+ 29 ♔h1 ♗b3 30 ♘f5?! *(D)*

Missing Black's next move. 30 ♕g6+!? ♕g7 31 ♕xd6 is still seriously better for White.

B



30...♔h8! 31 ♘e7

Or 31 ♕d3 ♕c5!.

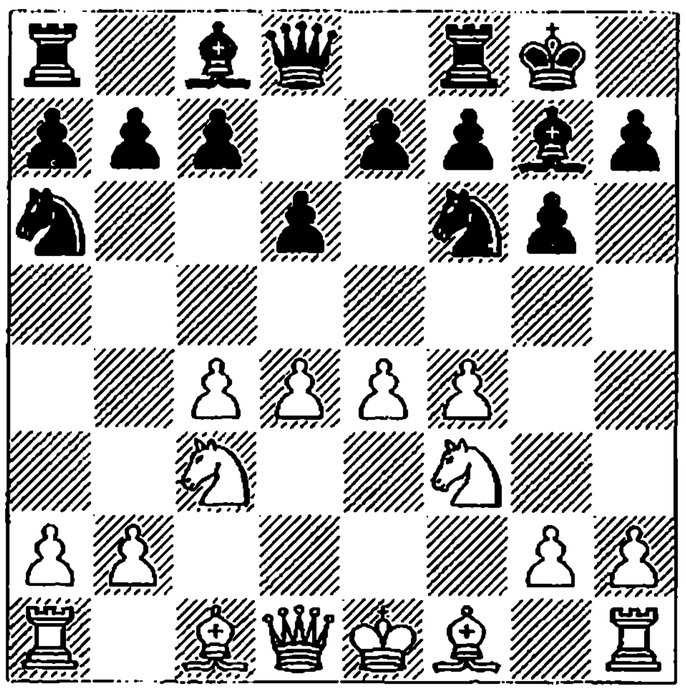
31...♖f6!

Suddenly the black pieces are wonderfully coordinated. He is even threatening 32...♖h6 now. In mutual time-trouble the players found a quick path to a draw.

32 ♕d3 ♕f2 33 ♕c3 ♔h7 34 h3 g4 35 hxg4 ♕h4+ 36 ♔g1 ♕f2+ ½-½

Game 33
Sofronie – Golubev
Bucharest 2003

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 5 f4 0-0 6 ♘f3 ♘a6 *(D)*


W

7 ♗e2

After 7 ♗d3 Black often plays 7...e5, but I trust I.Belov's original idea 7....♗g4!?. Now:

a) 8 ♗e3!? c5 9 d5 e6 10 dxe6 (10 h3!? ♗xf3 11 ♕xf3 exd5 12 cxd5 and now 12...♖e8 13 0-0 ♘b4 is strongly answered by 14 ♗b5!, while after 12...♘b4 13 ♗b1 ♖e8 14 a3! {Banikas-Delithanasis, Kavala open 1997} Black can try the bizarre 14...♘fxd5!? 15 exd5 ♗d4 16 ♘d1 ♘xd5 17 ♕xd5 ♕h4+ 18 ♔e2 ♖xe3+ 19 ♘xe3 ♖e8) 10...♗xe6! (10...fxe6 11 0-0 ♘b4 12 h3 ♗xf3 13 ♖xf3 ♘c6 14 ♕d2 ♘d4 15 ♖f2 ♘d7 16 ♖af1 is more pleasant for White, Moskalenko-Golubev, Odessa training match rpd 1992) and after 11 f5?! ♗xf5! 12 exf5 ♖e8 13 ♔d2 d5 Black is attacking – Gallagher.

b) 8 0-0 ♘d7! (in Jianu-Golubev, Bucharest open 2003 Black forgot the correct move-order and after 8...e5?! 9 fxe5 ♘d7 10 ♔h1!? ♗xf3 11 gxf3! dxe5 12 d5 found himself in a strategically unpleasant situation) 9 ♗e3 e5 10 fxe5 c5! 11 d5! ♘xe5 12 ♗e2 ♘xf3+ (12...♗xf3?! 13 gxf3! f5 14 f4) 13 ♗xf3 (13 gxf3 ♗h3 14 ♖f2 isn't dangerous for Black, who can play 14...f5!? or 14...♘b8 15 f4 ♘d7 16 ♖f3 ♗g4 17 ♖g3 ♗xe2 18 ♕xe2 f5, Jianu-Golubev, Playchess.com blitz 2004) 13...♗d7!? (13...♗xf3 14 ♕xf3 ♕e7 15 ♗f4 ♘c7 16 ♕g3 ♖ad8 17 ♔h1 ♗d4 18 ♖ae1 f6 19 ♘e2 ♗e5 20 ♘g1 occurred in Zsu.Polgar-Chiburdanidze, St Petersburg Ct wom (7) 1995 and several other games; Black should be able to hold this position with accurate play) 14 ♕d2 ♕e7 (14...♘c7 is also possible) 15 ♗g5 ♕e5 16 ♗f4 ♕e7 17 ♘e2 (17 ♖ab1!?) 17...♖ae8 18 ♖ae1 ♗c8 19 a3 ♘b8 20 b4 b6 21 bxc5 bxc5 22 ♖b1 (not 22 ♕a5?? g5 followed by ...g4) 22...♘d7 23 ♗g5 ♗f6 24 ♗h6 ♗g7 25 ♗g5 ♗f6 26 ♗h6 ♗g7 27 ♗g5 ½-½ Vaïsser-Golubev, ACP Internet blitz 2004. In the final position Black could even consider playing for a win by 27...f6!?.

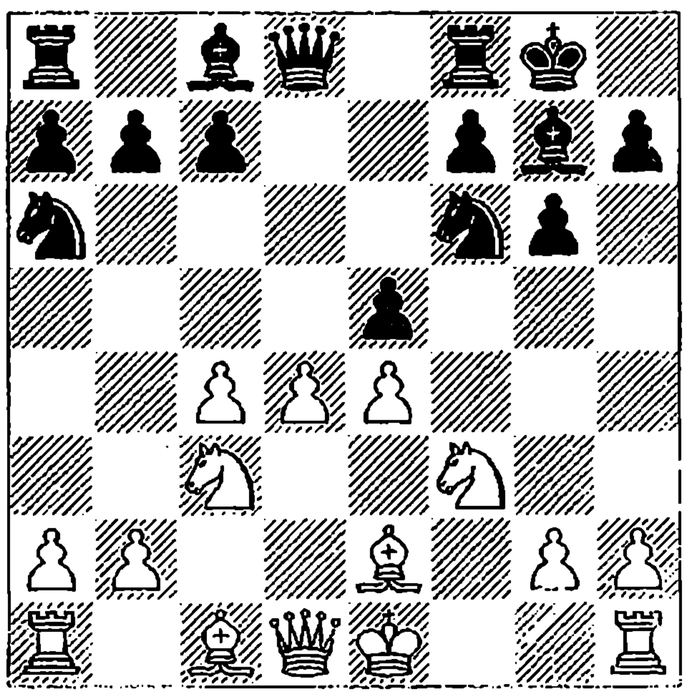
7...e5! 8 fxe5

After 8 dxe5 dxe5 9 ♕xd8 ♖xd8 10 ♘xe5 ♘c5 White doesn't have any advantage:

a) 11 ♘d5 ♘xd5 (11...c6!? 12 ♘e7+ ♔f8 13 ♘xc8 ♖axc8 is probably even simpler, Chiburdanidze-Xie Jun, Manila wom Wch (12) 1991) 12 exd5 ♖e8 13 ♗e3 ♗xe5! 14 fxe5 ♖xe5 15 ♔f2 (15 ♗xc5 ♗g4) 15...♘e4+ 16 ♔f3 ♗g4+! 17 ♔f4 (17 ♔xg4 ♘f6+ 18 ♔f3 ♖ae8 19 ♗d4 ♖f5+!) 17...♖ae8 (17....♗xe2!? 18 ♔xe5 ♖e8+ 19 ♔d4 ♘d6) 18 ♗xg4 ♘f6 and Black was fine in Gabriel-Kindermann, Bad Homburg 1997.

b) 11 ♗f3 ♗e6 (another good continuation is 11...♘fd7 12 ♘xd7 ♗xc3+! 13 bxc3 ♗xd7 14 0-0 ♗c6!) 12 ♘d5 (12 ♗e3 ♘fd7! =) 12...♘fd7! (more promising than 12...♘e8 13 ♗e3 ♗xe5 14 ♗xc5 ♗xd5) 13 ♘xc7 (13 ♘xd7 ♖xd7 14 0-0 c6 15 ♘e3 {Cherniakov-I.Belov, Podolsk 1990} 15...♖d4! appears favourable for Black) 13...♘xe5 14 fxe5 ♗xc4 15 ♗g5 ♗xe5!? 16 ♘xa8 ♖xa8 with sufficient compensation for the exchange.

8...dxe5 *(D)*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9 d5

9 ♘xe5!? c5 10 ♗e3 (10 d5 ♘xe4!) is not as innocuous as it may look. Then:

a) As I once learned myself in an Internet blitz game versus GM Nogueiras, 10...cxd4 11 ♗xd4 ♕e7? 12 ♘f3 favours White; for example, 12...♘xe4 13 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 14 ♕d4+ ♘f6 15 ♘d5 ♕d6 16 ♘g5 ♘b4 17 ♕xf6+ ♕xf6 18 ♘xf6 ♘c2+ 19 ♔d2 ♘xa1 20 ♘d5, Cifuentes-Comas Fabrego, Castellar open 1996.

b) 10...♘b4!? is perhaps a good answer for Black: 11 ♖c1 (or: 11 0-0 cxd4 12 ♗xd4 ♘c2!; 11 ♕b3 ♘xe4!! 12 ♘xe4 ♗f5, Merilo-Nizynski, corr. 1995-7) 11...♘g4 12 ♘xg4 (12 ♗xg4 cxd4 13 ♕xd4 ♕xd4!? 14 ♗xd4 ♗xg4 and Black can hardly be worse here, Christoffel-McNab, ICCF corr. 1999) 12...cxd4 13 a3 ♘c6 14 ♗d2 dxc3 15 ♗xc3 ♕g5! 16 ♗xg7 ♗xg4!? (Nizynski's suggestion 16...♖d8 allows a queen sacrifice in various versions, but 16...♔xg7!? is definitely playable) 17 ♗xf8 ♗xe2 18 ♔xe2 ♕xg2+ and it is only White who can have problems here.

9...c6 *(D)*

9...♘c5! can be suggested with more confidence: 10 ♗g5 (10 ♕c2? allows the typical 10...♘fxe4 11 ♘xe4 ♗f5 12 ♗d3 ♗xe4 13 ♗xe4 f5; Black has won countless games in this way!) 10...h6 11 ♗xf6 ♕xf6 12 b4 (12 0-0?! ♕b6 13 ♔h1 ♕xb2 14 ♘b5 and even after 14...c6?! 15 ♖b1 ♕xa2 16 dxc6 bxc6 17 ♘c7 ♘xe4, as in Komarov-Golubev, Playchess.com blitz 2004, White has no more than a draw by 18 ♖a1 ♕b2 19 ♖b1 =) 12...♘a6 (12...♘xe4 13 ♘xe4 ♕f4 14 ♘fd2 f5 15 g3 ♕e3 16 ♕b3! ♕xb3 17 axb3 fxe4 18 ♘xe4 was slightly better for White in Mamedyarov-Gouliev, Azerbaijan Ch 2002) 13 ♖b1 c5 14 a3 ♕b6! (14...♗d7, as in Lautier-Kasparov, Amsterdam (Euwe mem) 1994, allows 15 d6!?) 15 ♕d2 ♖d8 16 h4 h5 17 b5 ♘c7 18 ♕e3 ♕d6 and Black's position can be preferred, Rodriguez Vargas-Dorfman, Costa Catalana 1994.

10 0-0

After 10 dxc6 the correct reply is 10...♕b6!, as pointed out by Vaïsser (the obvious move 10...bxc6?! turned out to be insufficient for equality after 11 ♕xd8 ♖xd8 12 0-0 ♖e8 13 h3 ♘c5 14 ♘g5! h6 15 ♗e3 in Moskalenko-Golubev, Odessa training match rpd 1992).

The most testing continuation for Black appears to be 10 ♗g5!? h6 (10...♕b6 11 ♕b3!,

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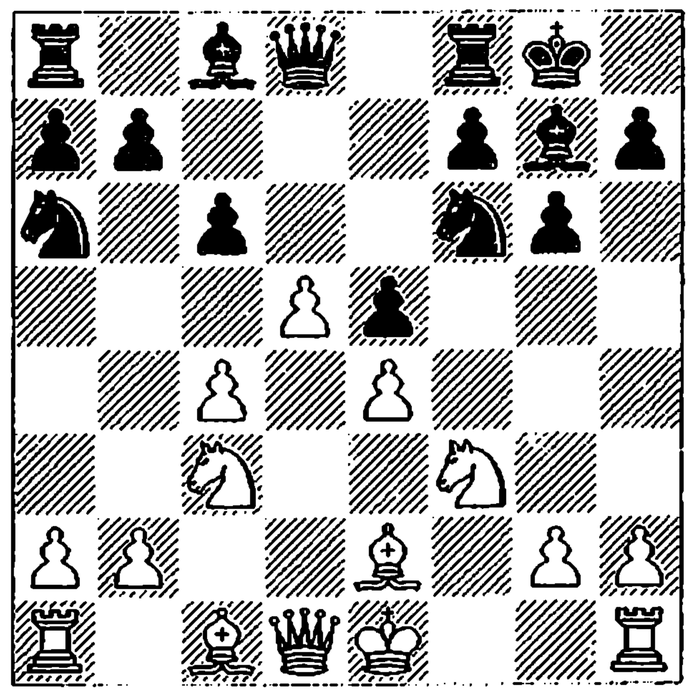

Maximenko-Martynov, USSR Cht (Azov) 1991 11 ♗h4 ♕b6 12 ♕b3! (12 ♕d2 ♘c5 13 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 14 ♕xh6 ♕xb2 15 ♖c1 ♗g7 16 ♕e3 f5 with sufficient counterplay, was tested in several correspondence games). Now Black can try 12...♘c5 13 ♕xb6 axb6 14 ♘d2 ♘g4 but to be honest I am not completely sure if his resources are sufficient for equality here.

10...cxd5 11 cxd5 ♘e8

The static position after this retreat can be evaluated as slightly better for White. More principled and interesting is 11...♕b6+ 12 ♔h1 ♘g4 13 ♕e1 ♘b4! 14 ♘a4 ♕d6 with chances for both sides in a complex position, Vaïsser-M.Kaminski, Biel open 1995.

12 ♔h1

Usually White prefers 12 ♗e3, but my opponent had another idea in mind.

12...♘d6 13 ♘d2!? *(D)*

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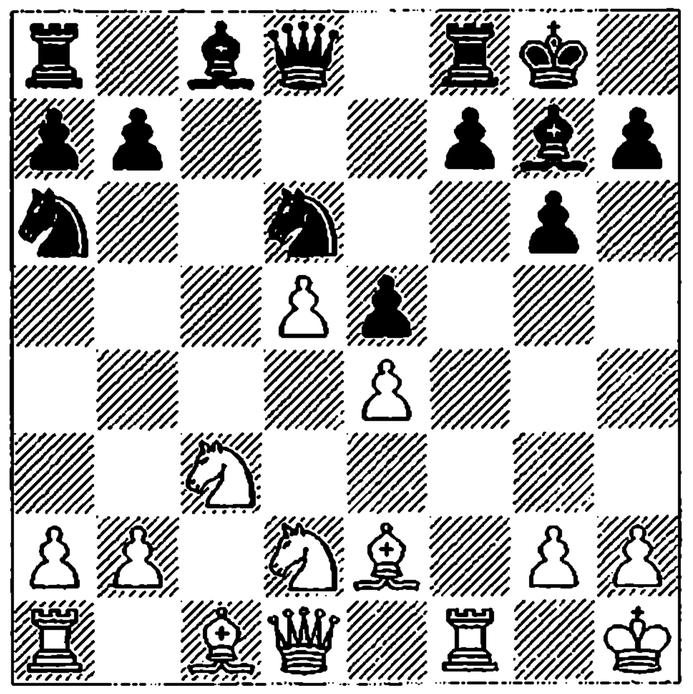

13...♕h4

A slightly strange move, but Black wanted to prevent the exchange of the d6-knight by ♘c4.

14 b3! ♘b4

Another creative and possibly somewhat dubious move. 14...♘c5 15 ♗a3 b6 seems to be natural, but even 16 ♗xc5 bxc5 17 ♘a4 ♘xe4

18 ♘xe4 ♕xe4 19 ♘xc5 might give White some initiative, as his d-pawn is dangerous.

15 a3

Black's idea was to answer 15 ♗a3 with 15...a5 (well, there is simply nothing else).

15...♘a6 16 b4!?

16 a4 could have been answered by 16...♘c5 (16...♘b4?! 17 a5!) 17 ♗a3 b6.

16...♗d7 17 ♘f3 ♕e7 18 ♗g5 f6 19 ♗e3 ♖fc8

19...♘c7 deserves attention, keeping the rooks where they are and planning ...♘ce8 and ...f5.

20 ♖c1 ♘c7 21 ♕b3 ♘ce8 22 ♘d2 ♔h8 23 a4 f5 *(D)*

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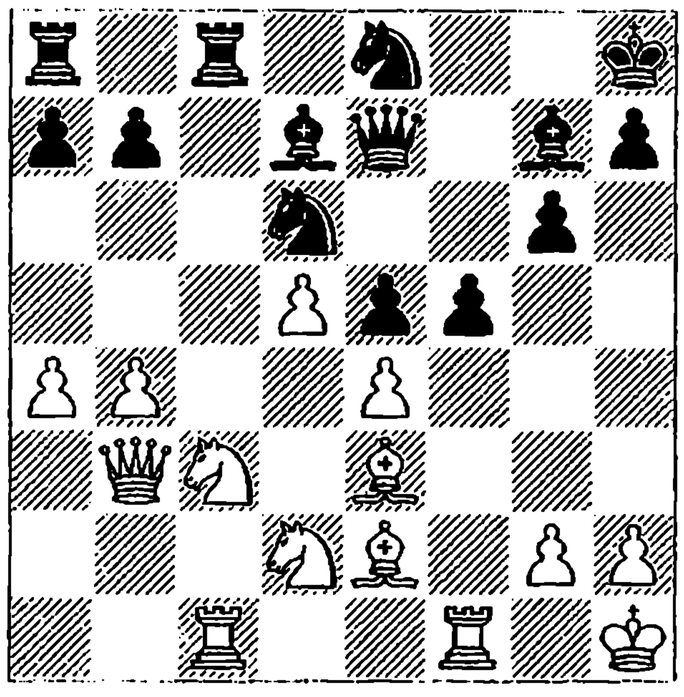

Both sides have regrouped their forces as they wished, and now a more concrete fight begins.

24 a5

24 exf5!? gxf5 25 a5 is a possible alternative, but White (as his 26th move also showed) did not sense any danger on the kingside.

24...f4 25 ♗c5 g5 26 ♘b5?!

An inaccuracy. 26 ♕d1!? deserved attention, but it seems that after 26...♕d8 27 ♗g4 ♘f6 28 ♗xd7 ♕xd7 Black is alive.

26...♗xb5 27 ♗xb5

With the obvious threat of 28 ♗xe8 ♖xe8 29 ♘c4.

27...b6! 28 axb6 axb6 29 ♗xe8 bxc5 30 ♗c6 ♖ab8 31 ♖xc5 g4! *(D)*

Black has lost a pawn on the queenside, but now his hopes for an attack become more real.

32 ♖a5 ♗h6 33 ♕c3 ♖g8 34 ♘c4 ♘xc4 35 ♕xc4 f3!?

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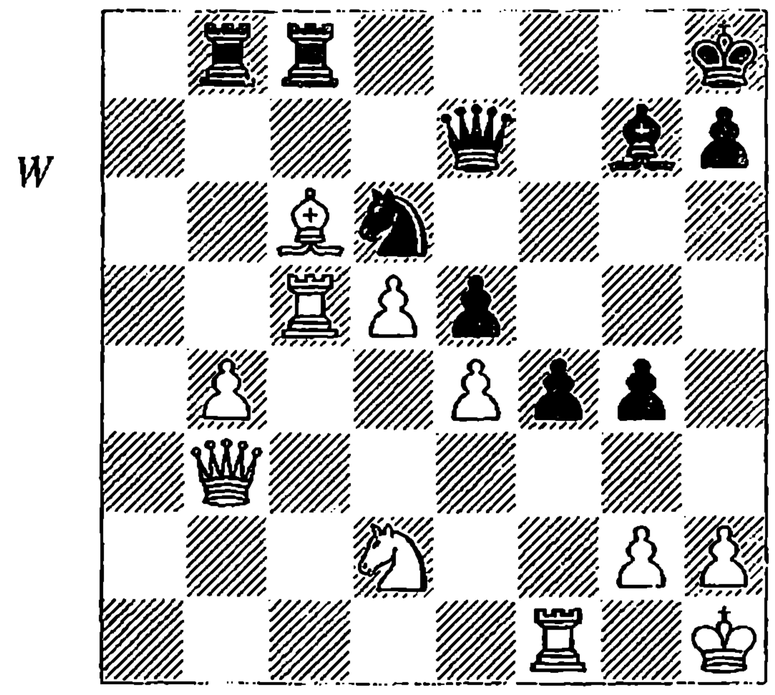


Black can hardly be worse in the endgame after 35...♖xb4 36 ♕c5 ♕xc5 37 ♖xc5, but he was already playing for more than that.

36 ♕c5

It is not easy to say what was White's best, but after this move Black is a lot better.

36...fxg2+ 37 ♔xg2 ♕h4 38 ♖a3

White could have tried 38 ♕c3 ♖xb4! 39 ♕xe5+ ♗g7 40 ♕g3 ♖b2+ 41 ♖f2 (41 ♔h1 ♕h5 with the idea 42 ♖f5 ♖b1+ 43 ♔g2 ♗d4 44 ♕e5+ ♗xe5 45 ♖xh5 ♗d4) 41...♖xf2+ 42 ♕xf2 ♕h3+ 43 ♔h1, but then 43...g3! 44 ♕g2 ♕h5! (Burgess) wins.

38...♗f4 39 ♖h1

39 ♖xf4 does not help: 39...exf4 40 ♕d4+ (or 40 ♕c3+ ♖g7 and 41 ♖a7? loses to 41...♕h3+!) 40...♖g7 and again 41 ♖a7? loses by force after 41...f3+ 42 ♔f1 ♕h3+ 43 ♔e1 f2+! 44 ♕xf2 ♕c3+, etc.

39...♖bf8 40 d6?!

40 ♖g3! was necessary.

40...♖f6?!

Preparing Black's next move, but it would have worked at once as well: 40...♗e3! 41 ♕xe3 ♖f3 42 ♖e1 ♕h3+! followed by 43...g3, winning.

41 ♗d7?

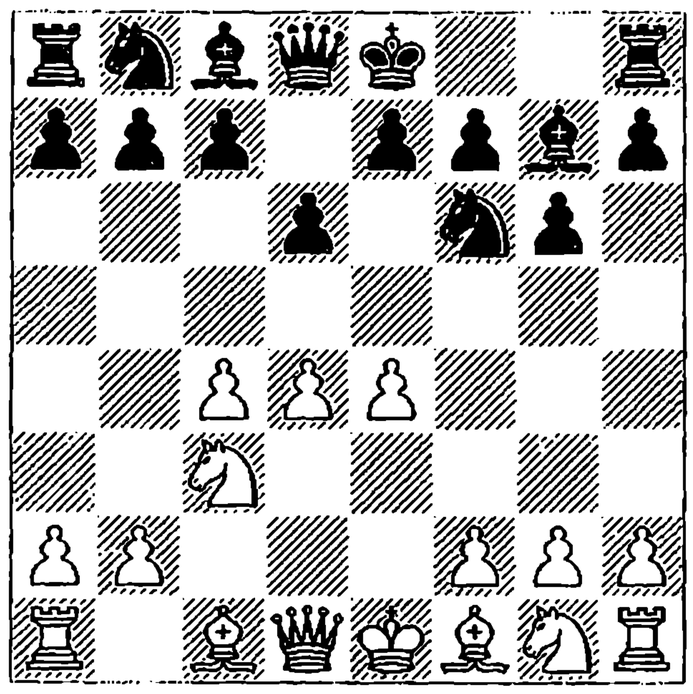
41 d7? ♗e3! and 41 ♖g3? ♕h6! are also hopeless for White, but 41 ♗b5! enables White to offer some resistance because after 41...♗e3? 42 ♕xe3 ♖f3 43 ♕c5 ♕h3+ 44 ♔g1 there is no mate on f1, and Black must play 44...♖xa3 45 ♕xe5+ ♖g7 with a draw.

41...♗e3! 0-1

White resigned in view of 42 ♕xe3 ♕h3+ 43 ♕xh3 gxh3+ 44 ♔xh3 ♖h6#.

9 4 e4 d6: Rare Lines with ♘ge2

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 *(D)*



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In this chapter we shall consider three relatively rare options for White: 5 g3, 5 ♘ge2 and 5 ♗d3, which have just one common idea (White develops his g1-knight to e2) but lead to very different types of positions. 5 g3 is a slightly inferior version of the standard Fianchetto lines (Chapter 11); the other two are more serious.

Game 34

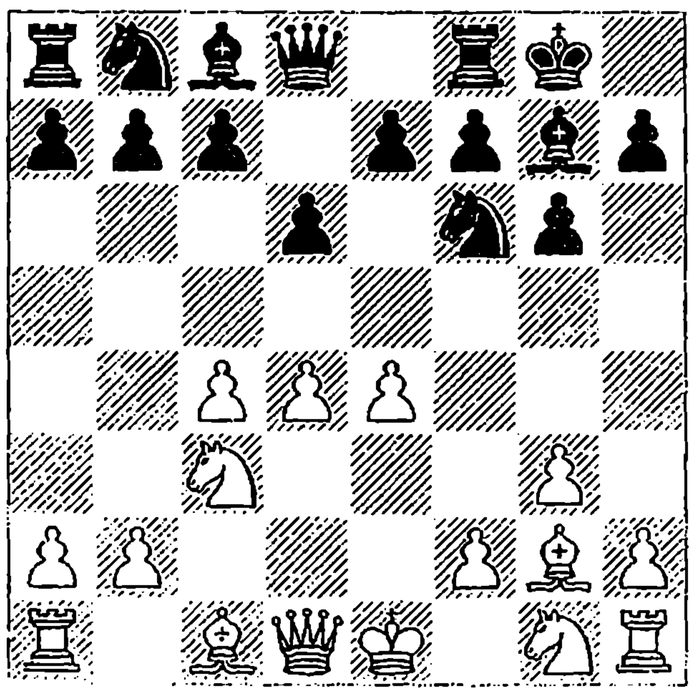
M. Danielian – Golubev

USSR jr Cht (Dimitrovgrad) 1988

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 g3 ♗g7 4 ♗g2 0-0 5 ♘c3 d6

Here, the usual continuation is 6 ♘f3(!), which leads to lines we shall consider in Chapter 11, devoted to the g3 system.

6 e4 *(D)*



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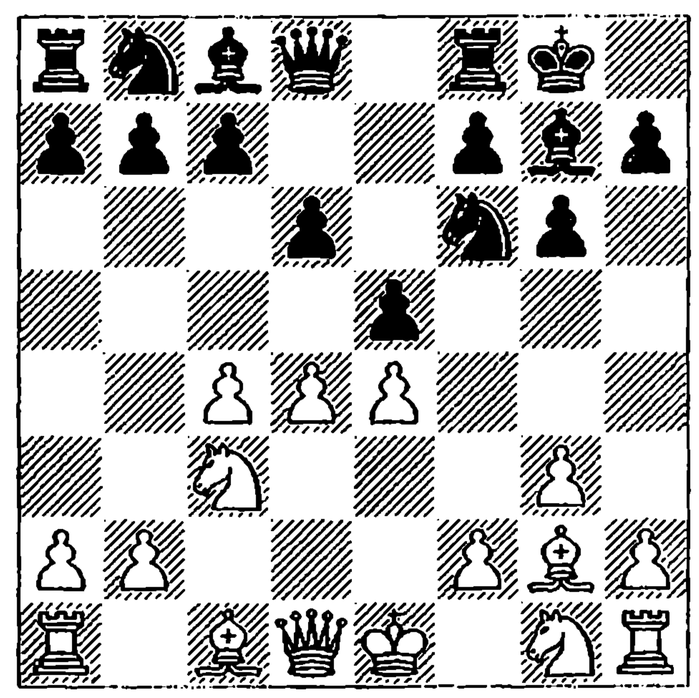
This position as a rule arises via a move-order such as 1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 5 g3 0-0 6 ♗g2.

6...e5! *(D)*

The most principled reply. If he wishes, Black can also play 6...♘bd7 or 6...♘c6 followed by 7...e5. The set-up with ♘ge2 might make special sense if Black continues with 6...c5 7 ♘ge2 ♘c6. Now: 8 d5 ♘a5 9 b3 (the c3-knight is protected!) 9...a6 10 ♖b1 ♖b8 11 0-0 b5 12 cxb5 axb5 13 b4 cxb4 14 ♖xb4 with somewhat better chances for White, De Lange-Matanović, Leipzig OL 1960.



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7 ♘ge2!

The less flexible 7 ♘f3 can be answered by 7...♘c6 8 d5 ♘d4. After 7 d5 ♘bd7 8 ♘ge2 a5! Black has good, untroubled play. For example: 9 0-0 ♘c5 10 ♗d2 ♗d7 11 ♕c2 ♘h5 12 f3 f5 13 exf5 gxf5 14 ♖ae1 f4!? with some initiative. Gervasio-Golubev, Le Touquet open 1994.

7...♘c6 *(D)*

This looks like a logical and challenging move. Nevertheless, 7...exd4 8 ♘xd4 ♘c6!? is a decent alternative. For example, 9 ♘xc6 bxc6 10 0-0 ♗e6 (another known and sensible option is 10...♘d7) 11 b3 ♕c8 (11...♘xe4?! 12 ♘xe4 ♗xa1 13 ♗g5 f6 14 ♗h6 favours White – he attacks Black's dark-squared bishop, developing a menacing initiative) 12 ♗b2 ♗h3 with approximate equality, Golod-Roiz, Israeli Ch (Ramat Aviv/Modiin) 2000.

After 7...♘bd7 8 0-0 Black usually continues with ...exd4 (immediately or after 8...c6). This may fully suit players who use lines with ...♘bd7 and ...exd4 against White's normal set-up with ♘f3 in the g3 system – after ...exd4 and ♘xd4 Black just gets what he wants by transposition. Alternatively, Black can also try to keep the tension in the centre, but the specific nuances of positions with the knight on e2 are not well researched.

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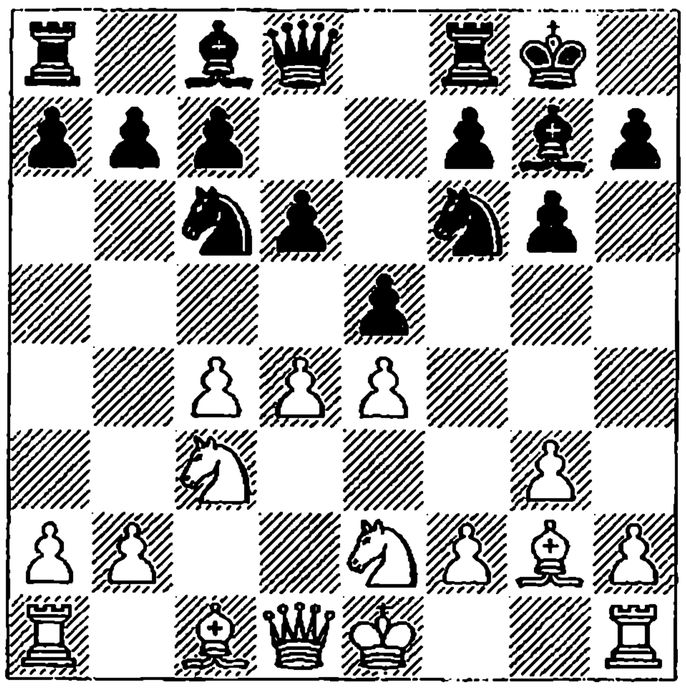

8 d5

If 8 0-0? exd4 9 ♘xd4, then 9...♘xe4! works well for Black.

8...♘d4 9 0-0!

After 9 ♘xd4 exd4 10 ♘e2 (10 ♕xd4? ♘xe4 11 ♕xe4 ♖e8) 10...♖e8 11 f3 c5 12 dxc6 bxc6 13 ♘xd4 Black certainly has sufficient compensation for the pawn. 13...♗a6!? (as in Reshevsky-Najdorf, Mexico/New York/Salvador (10) 1952) looks like a good decision. Then 14 ♘xc6 is answered by 14...♕c7! with the initiative.

9...c5

Again, the 'principled' move, which is often recommended for Black. However, I do not see clear equality for Black here, so I would rather suggest the simple 9...♘xe2+(!). After 10 ♕xe2 a little-studied position arises, which, to my mind, is fully playable for Black. The prophylactic 10...a5!? deserves attention (in case of 10...♘d7 11 ♗e3 a5 12 a3 ♘c5 13 ♕c2! f5 14 b4 axb4 15 axb4 ♖xa1 16 ♖xa1 ♘a6 Black is making heavy commitments, while 10...♘e8 can be answered by 11 ♗d2!? f5 12 exf5 gxf5 13 f4!, P.H.Nielsen-Golubev, ACP Internet blitz 2004) and Black should not be afraid of 11 f4 exf4 12 gxf4 ♖e8.

10 dxc6! *(D)*

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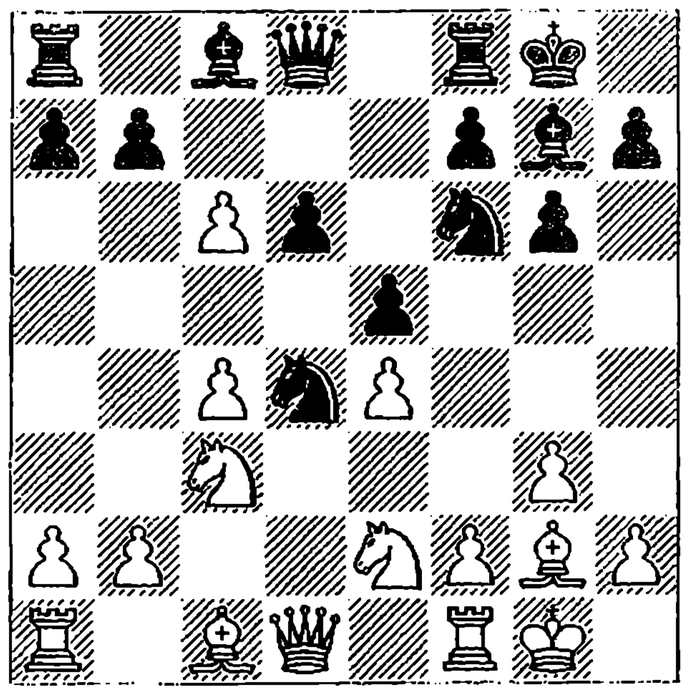

10...♘xe2+

Or 10...bxc6 11 ♘xd4 exd4 12 ♕xd4! (12 ♘e2 ♗g4! 13 f3 ♗e6 14 ♘xd4 ♗xc4 = Ståhlberg-Pilnik, Amsterdam 1950) and I do not see how Black can equalize completely: 12...♘g4 (12...♘d5 13 ♕d3 ♘xc3 14 bxc3 ♕a5 has also occurred in practice: most often Black reached the desired draw, but this line looks absolutely uninspiring for him) 13 ♕d2 ♘e5 (13...♕f6?! is dubious: White can answer with 14 ♖d1 or 14 f4) 14 b3 (14 c5 dxc5 gives Black counterplay thanks to his active knight) 14...♕f6 15 ♗b2 ♘f3+ 16 ♗xf3 ♕xf3 17 ♕d1! ♗g4 18 ♕xf3 ♗xf3 19 ♖fe1 ♗d4 (not 19...♖fe8?! 20 ♖e3 ♗xe4 21 ♖ae1) 20 ♘a4 c5 21 ♗xd4 cxd4 and now 22 c5!? allows White to play for a win without any risk. Instead, 22 ♖ad1!? ♗xd1 23 ♖xd1 f5 24 ♖xd4 fxe4 25 ♘c3 e3 26 fxe3 ♖f3, as in Van Putten-Van Laatum, Dieren open 1991, is probably slightly better for White as well, but there Black is at least not just playing for a draw.

11 ♕xe2 bxc6 12 ♖d1!

Not 12 c5?! ♕a5! 13 ♖d1 (13 cxd6 ♗a6) 13...♕xc5 14 ♗e3 ♕b4 15 a3 ♕b8 and Black retains the extra pawn.

12...♗g4

This move is possibly too sophisticated and, as it turned out on the 18th move, only helped White to exchange the light-squared bishops. Black had many other possibilities but I am afraid that his chances are somewhat worse in either case.

13 ♗f3 ♗e6 14 ♗e3

Not clear is 14 c5 d5 15 exd5 ♘xd5.

14...♕e7 15 b4 ♖fd8 16 ♗g5 h6 17 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 18 ♗g4 ♖ac8 19 ♗xe6 fxe6 *(D)*

Capturing with the queen would leave Black on the verge of absolute strategic catastrophe:

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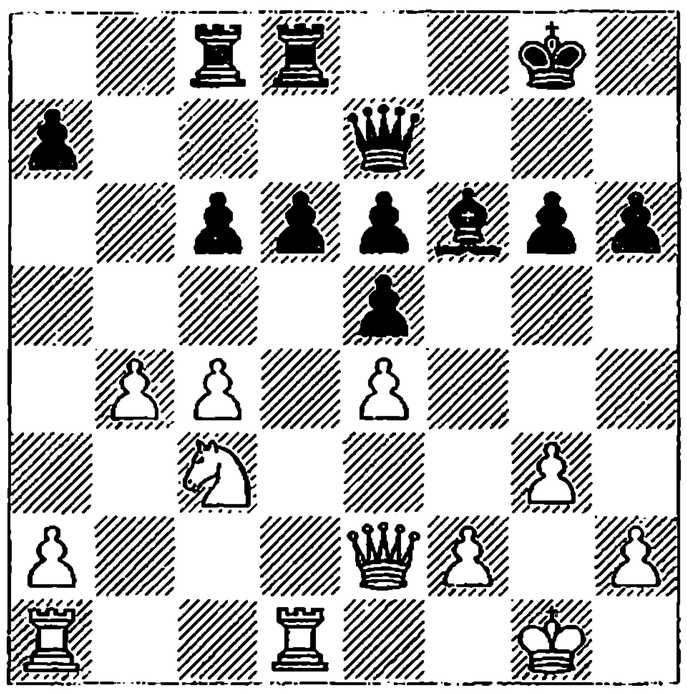


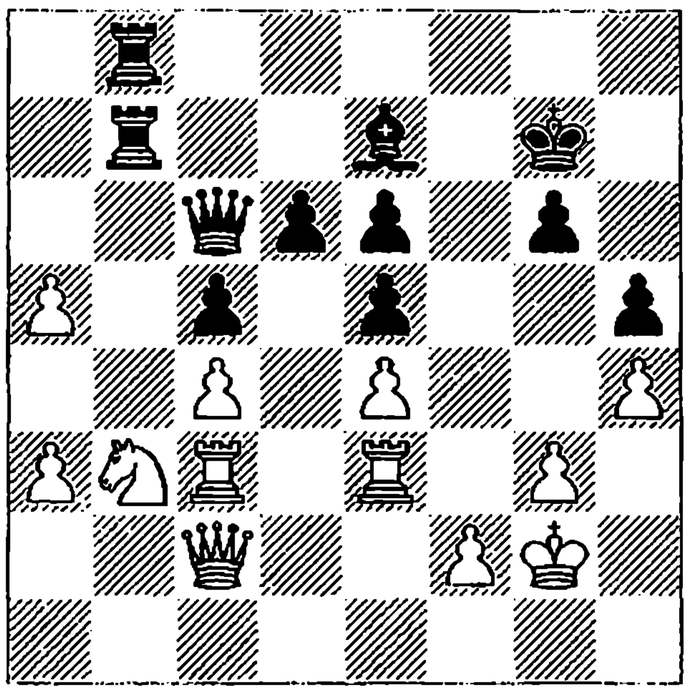
White would need only to exchange the c6-pawn by b5 to secure the commanding square d5 for his knight for ever. The position after 19...fxe6 can be evaluated as one with a small but very stable advantage for White: Black can only await his opponent's actions.

20 ♕c2 ♔g7 21 ♕b3 ♖d7 22 ♖ac1 ♖dc7 23 ♘a4 ♖b8 24 a3 ♗g5 25 ♖c3 ♖f8 26 ♖f3 ♖d8 27 ♕b2 ♗f6 28 ♕b3 ♖b7 29 ♖fd3 ♕c7 30 ♘c3 ♗e7 31 ♘a2 ♖db8 32 ♕c3 ♔h7 33 ♘c1

White decided to transfer his knight to a5. Black, who did not like to check how dangerous this plan is, prevented it with a reasonable pawn sacrifice.

33...a5!? 34 bxa5 ♖a8 35 ♘b3 c5 36 ♕c2 ♕c6 37 ♖c3 ♖ab8 38 ♔g2 ♕a4 39 ♖dd3 ♕c6 40 ♖f3 ♔g7 41 h4 h5 42 ♖fe3 *(D)*

B



42...♕a4

Perhaps it was safer to make some waiting move by the king, such as 42...♔h7!?, when it would be very hard for White to improve his position. Now he gains the possibility of exchanging the queens.

43 ♘d4!? ♕xc2 44 ♘xc2 ♖b2?!

Black was very happy with his (temporary) control over the b-file, and overestimated its value. Better was 44...♖a8 (or 44...♖a7) 45 ♖b3 ♖xb3 46 ♖xb3 ♖xa5.

45 ♘a1! ♖a2

Maybe 45...♖a8!? 46 ♖b3 ♖xb3 47 ♘xb3 ♔f7 was the lesser of the evils here.

46 ♖b3! *(D)*

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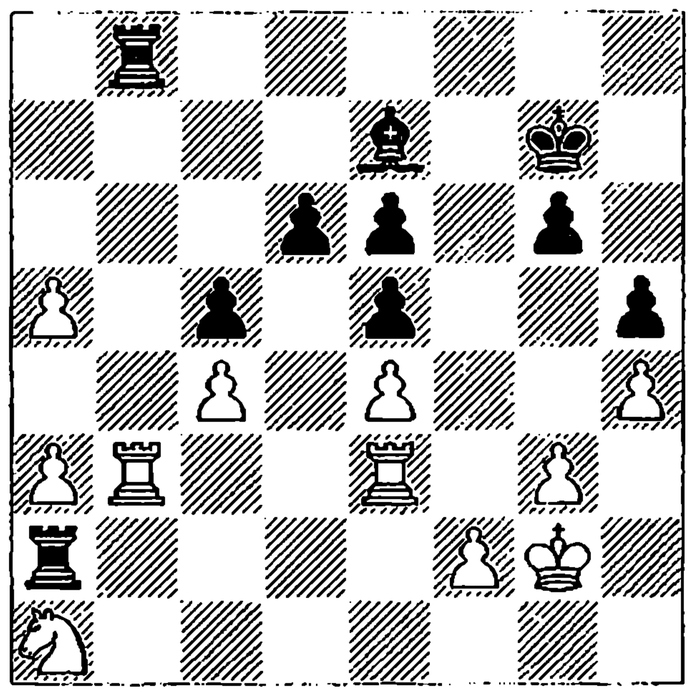


The point. Now Black has serious problems because he is forced to abandon the b-file.

46...♖a8

46...♖f8? 47 ♖f3! ♖xf3 48 ♔xf3 ♖xa1 49 a6 and White promotes his pawn. Or 46...♖xb3? 47 ♖xb3 and White wins.

47 ♖b7

Probably stronger was 47 ♖f3! ♖a7 (not 47...♖xa1? 48 ♖b7 ♖e8 49 a6) 48 ♖b1!, when 48...♗d8 49 a6 ♗c7 looks like Black's only chance to organize resistance.

47...♔f7 48 ♘b3 ♖xa3 49 ♖f3+

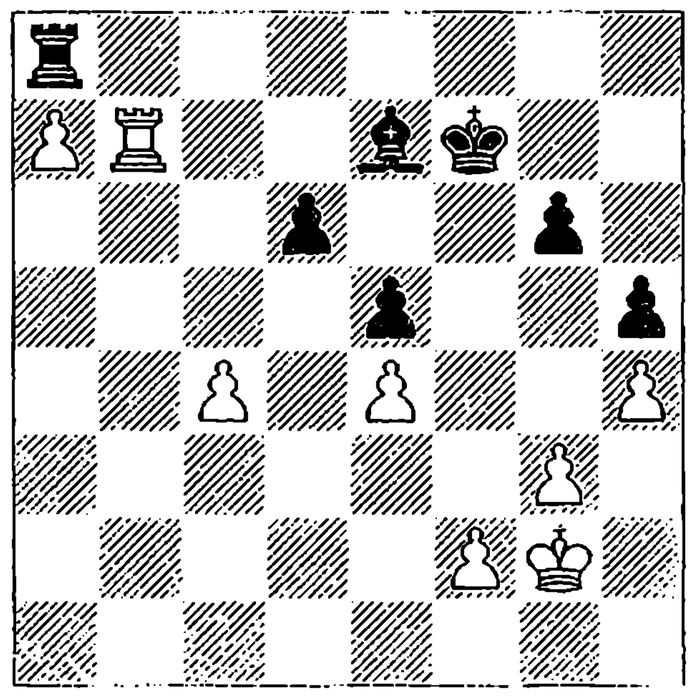
The start of a nice combination, which, however, is hardly sufficient for a win. Another possible idea was 49 ♖d3!? ♔e8 50 ♘xc5 ♖xd3 51 ♘xd3 ♖xa5 52 c5.

49...♔e8 50 ♘xc5!? ♖xf3 51 ♘xe6! ♖f8!

Not 51...♖xf2+? 52 ♔xf2 ♖xa5 53 ♘c7 ♔f8 54 ♘d5.

52 a6! ♔f7 53 ♘xf8 ♔xf8 54 a7 ♔f7 *(D)*

W



Perhaps it is not possible for either side to improve his position. White begins to repeat moves...

55 ♔h2 ♔e6 56 ♔g2 g5?

And Black, trying to activate his bishop, blunders! With the white king somewhere like d3, ...g5 would be correct, but here this advance leads Black into trouble.

57 g4!! gxh4

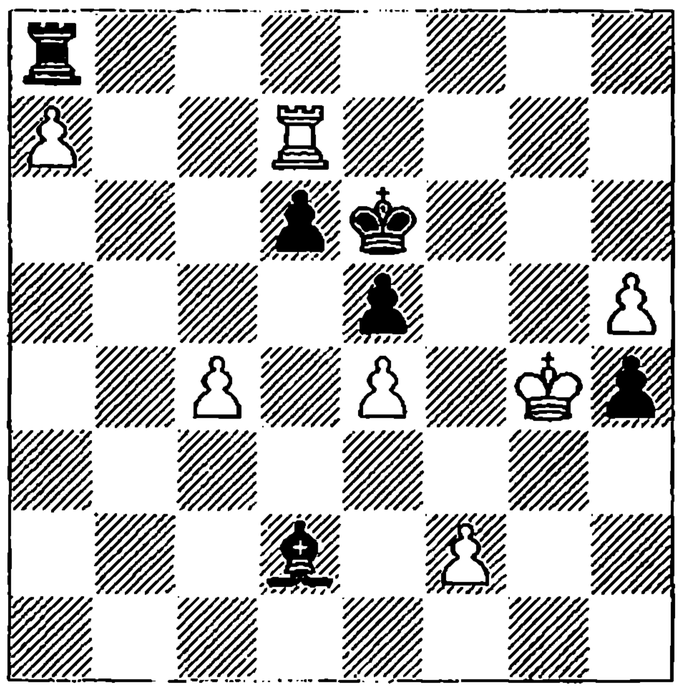
After 57...hxg4? 58 h5 the h5-pawn is simply unstoppable.

58 gxh5 ♗g5 59 ♔h3 ♔f6 60 ♔g4 ♗d2! 61 ♖d7!

Not 61 ♔xh4? ♗e1! 62 ♔g3 ♔g5.

61...♔e6 *(D)*

Here 61...♗e1 loses to 62 h6!.



62 ♖b7

Tired after a long struggle, White misses an excellent chance: 62 ♖g7!, and I do not see a way for Black to escape: 62...♔f6 (62...♗e1 63 h6 ♔f6 64 ♖b7 ♗xf2 65 h7 ♗xa7 66 ♖xa7 ♖h8 67 ♔h5 h3 68 ♔h6 h2 69 ♖a1 and wins; or 62...♗c1 63 ♔xh4, etc.) 63 ♖g6+! ♔f7 (63...♔e7 64 h6!) 64 ♖xd6 ♗b4 (64...♗e1 65 ♖d1! also wins for White) 65 ♖d7+ ♔e6 66 ♖c7! and so on.

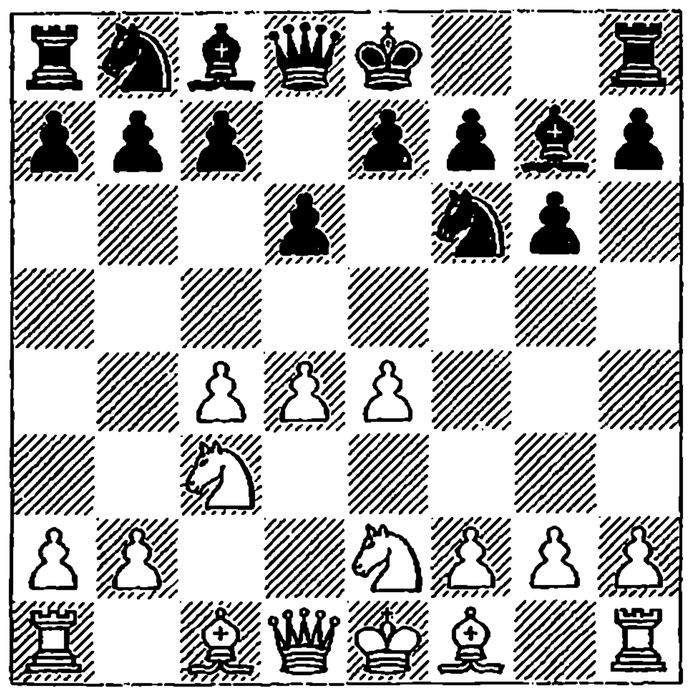
62...♔f6 63 ♖d7 ♔e6 64 ♖b7? ½-½

Agreeing to a threefold repetition, which ensured fourth place for the Ukrainian team in the USSR junior team championship.

Besides the players in this game, on the last board in the final group some promising young guys were playing: Kramnik (Russia) and Svidler (St Petersburg). The Moscow team had another future GM, Schekachev, on the last board. Well, now everyone can see why the Soviet Union was destroyed: Russia had too many teams in the sport competitions!

Game 35
Zeller – Golubev
Deizisiau open 1997

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 5 ♘ge2 *(D)*



A cunning move. White preserves the possibility to switch to the Sämisch System by 6 f3 (and as we shall see, further development by 6 g3 and 7 ♗g2 may also make sense in certain cases). But White's main idea is to develop his knight to g3. From this seemingly very passive location it will be very helpful in the fight against Black's most typical active plans.

5...e5?!

Black has tried many different options, which is not surprising because White does not develop any immediate pressure on him in this line. Due to the lack of top-level games it is hard for the moment to judge which move is Black's best, but 5...e5 is almost certainly not it. Other ideas:

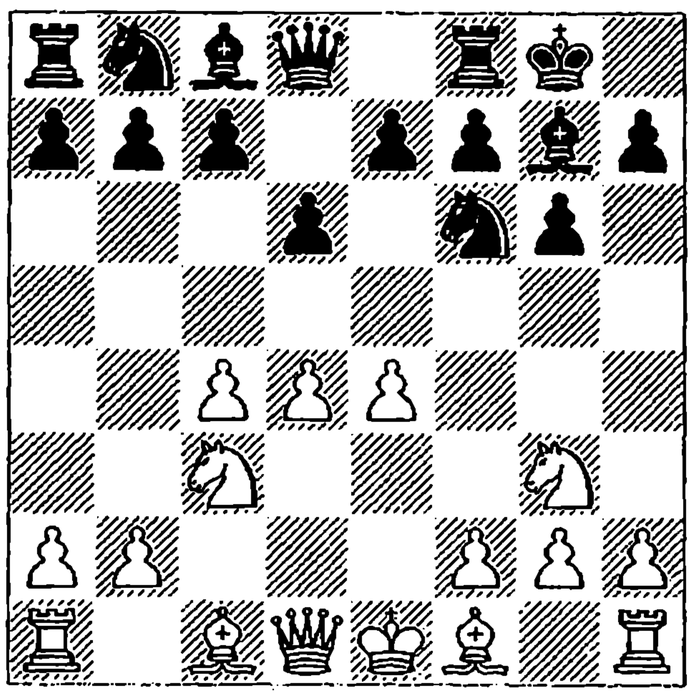
a) 5...c5 6 d5 b5 (forcing White to capture on b5 with a pawn, before he has protected the e4-pawn by playing ♘g3) 7 cxb5 a6 8 ♘g3 has only been tried by Black a few times in serious games. It seems that White is solid and it is not easy for Black to obtain full compensation.

b) 5...a6!? (planning to continue with a quick ...c6 and ...b5) was answered in Korchnoi-Gallagher, Dresden Z 1998 by 6 g3!? 0-0 7 ♗g2 ♘bd7 8 0-0 e5 9 b3 exd4 10 ♘xd4 ♖e8 11 ♗e3 ♖b8 and here 12 h3!? transposes to a position from Borovikov-Golubev (2001) which we shall consider in the Fianchetto Variation chapter (Game 54). However, it is also not of the taste of every KI player.

c) 5...♘bd7!? is fully playable, but the possible concern here is that after 6 f3!? not everyone would be happy to meet the Sämisch with an early ...♘bd7. Instead, 6 ♘g3 c6 7 ♗e2 a6 8 ♗e3 h5!? occurred in the game Serper-I.Nikolaidis, St Petersburg open 1993, which White won in outstanding style, although Black's position in the opening was rather playable. The game deserves to be given here in full: 9 f3 b5 10 c5 dxc5 11 dxc5 ♕c7 (11...h4!? 12 ♘f1 h3 13 g3 0-0 deserves attention, as in Friese-Wiege, corr. 1998) 12 0-0 h4 13 ♘h1 ♘h5 14 ♕d2 e5 15 ♘f2 ♘f8?! (15...♘f4 16 ♘d3 with a slight advantage for White -- Serper) 16 a4 b4 17 ♘d5! (obtaining good compensation for the knight, but this is just the beginning) 17...cxd5 18 exd5 f5 19 d6 ♕c6 20 ♗b5!! axb5 21 axb5 ♕xb5 22 ♖xa8 ♕c6 23 ♖fa1 f4 24 ♖1a7! ♘d7 (if 24...fxe3, then White wins by 25 ♕d5!!) 25 ♖xc8+ ♕xc8 26 ♕d5 fxe3 27 ♕e6+ ♔f8 28 ♖xd7 exf2+ 29 ♔f1 ♕e8 (also insufficient is 29...♕a6+ 30 ♔xf2 ♕e2+ 31 ♔xe2 ♘f4+ 32 ♔f1 ♘xe6 33 c6) 30 ♖f7+!! ♕xf7 31 ♕c8+ ♕e8 32 d7 ♔f7 33 dxe8♕+ ♖xe8 34 ♕b7+ ♖e7 35 c6! e4 36 c7 e3 37 ♕d5+ ♔f6 38 ♕d6+ ♔f7 39 ♕d5+ ♔f6 40 ♕d6+ ♔f7 41 ♕xe7+ ♔xe7 42 c8♕ ♗h6 43 ♕c5+ ♔e8 44 ♕b5+ ♔d8 45 ♕b6+ ♔d7 46 ♕xg6 e2+ 47 ♔xf2 ♗e3+ 48 ♔e1 1-0.

d) 5...0-0 6 ♘g3 *(D)* (6 f3 is a Sämisch with an early ♘ge2) is the most popular continuation.

B



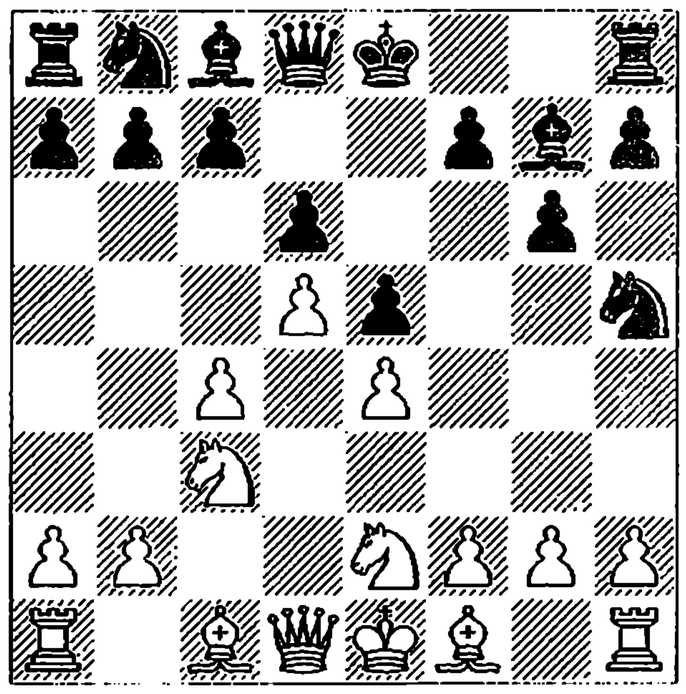
Now Black usually plays 6...e5 (I imagine that 6...c6!? 7 ♗e2 and now 7...♘bd7 8 0-0 a6 or 7...a6 might be a more interesting plan for Black; also possible is 6...c5 7 d5 e6 8 ♗e2 exd5 but here White is not obliged to transpose to a rare line of the Modern Benoni by 9 cxd5 and can instead continue 9 exd5!? with a slight advantage, thanks to the g3-knight which controls the sensitive squares f5 and e4) 7 d5 c6 (possibly more promising is 7...a5! 8 ♗e2 ♘a6 and if 9 h4!?, then 9...c6 10 h5 cxd5 11 cxd5 ♘c5 12 ♗e3 ♕b6! followed by 13...♗d7, as in Korchnoi-Nunn, Wijk aan Zee 1992 and several other games) 8 ♗e2 cxd5 9 cxd5. An example from my own practice convinced me that White enjoys somewhat better chances here: 9...a6 (9...♘bd7 usually comes to the same thing after 10 0-0 or 10 h4!? h5 11 ♗g5 a6 – but not 11...♕b6 12 ♖b1! ♘h7?! 13 ♘a4! ♕c7 14 ♖c1, when 14...♕a5+? loses to 15 b4 ♕xb4+ 16 ♗d2) 10 0-0 (or 10 ♗e3 h5 11 ♗g5 ♘bd7 12 0-0; in my view, the plan with 10 h4!? is less dangerous for Black – e.g., 10...h5 11 ♗g5 ♘bd7 12 ♘f1!? ♕e8 13 ♘d2 b5 14 a3 ♘h7 15 ♗e3 f5 16 f3 ♘df6 17 ♗d3 ♗d7 18 ♕e2 ♔h8 19 0-0-0 with chances for both sides, I.Novikov-Xie Jun, Helsinki open 1992) 10...♘bd7 (10...b5 11 b4! ♘bd7 12 a4 has led to unimpressive results for Black in a couple of grandmaster games) 11 ♗g5!? (11 ♗e3 h5 12 ♗g5 transposes, but 11 a4!? is of interest, trying to win a tempo) 11...h6 12 ♗e3 h5 13 ♗g5 ♕e8 14 a4!? (more often White has tried 14 ♕d2 ♘h7 15 ♗e3 h4 16 ♘h1 f5 17 exf5 gxf5 18 f4 with a typical situation where Black has some play but White's pieces are cooperating perfectly and he should be at least slightly better) 14...♘h7 15 ♗e3 ♕d8!? (15...h4 16 ♘h1 f5 17 exf5 gxf5 18 f4, with some advantage, was later tested in Poluliakhov-Gasanov, Krasnodar 2002; 15...♕e7!?) 16 a5! h4 17 ♘h1 ♗f6 18 b4! ♗g5 19 ♕d2 f5? (inconsistent; 19...♗xe3 20 ♕xe3 ♕g5 is more to the point) 20 exf5 gxf5 21 f4 exf4 22 ♗xf4 with a clear advantage for White, Shemeakin-Golubev, Yalta open 1995.

6 d5

6 f3! 0-0 7 ♗g5! is more precise, transposing to a subvariation of the Sämisch which is not so pleasant for Black. In Svetushkin-Golubev, Bucharest 2002 Black was not ready for such a development of events and after 7...exd4 8 ♘xd4 ♘c6 9 ♘c2 ♗e6 10 ♗e2 h6 11 ♗h4 ♘e5 12 ♘e3 g5 13 ♗f2 ♘h5 14 g3 ♕d7? 15 h4! found himself in an already lost position.

6...♘h5!? *(D)*

Black's idea is to meet 7 ♘g3 with 7...♘f4! but of course White is not obliged to go for this.


W

7 ♘g1!?

An eccentric, but interesting and fully playable move: White prevents ...f5 for the time being. We saw similar retreats by the knight in the 5 ♘f3 0-0 6 h3 line. 7 ♗e3 0-0 8 ♕d2 f5 9 f3 is a line of the ...e5 Sämisch, though not the most popular one for White. The most critical continuation is probably 7 h3!? with the idea 7...f5 8 exf5 gxf5 9 ♘d4!.

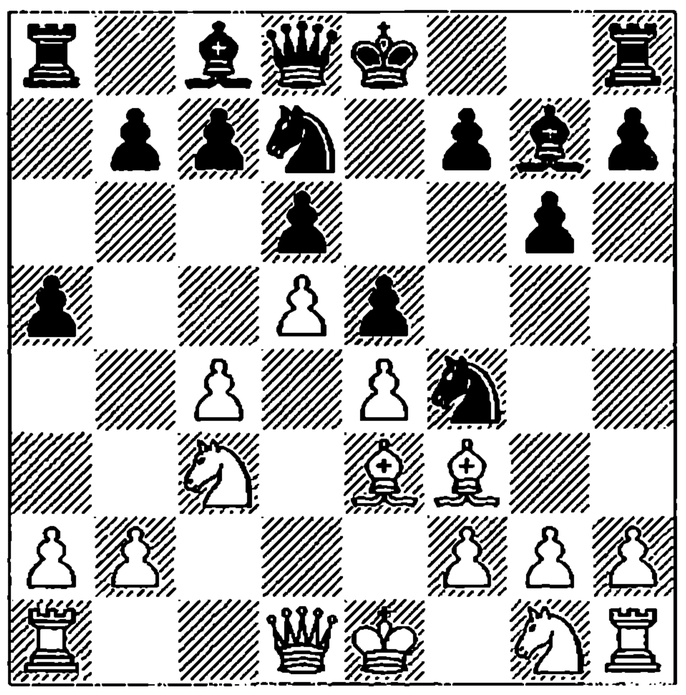
7...♘d7

The banal 7...0-0 is of course also possible.

8 ♗e3 a5 9 ♗e2 ♘f4?

Better was 9...♘hf6 10 ♘f3!?, transposing to a known position, where the normal continuation is 10...♘g4 11 ♗g5, etc.

10 ♗f3! *(D)*


B

Now the f4-knight is in danger. One of the reasons I have included this game (a rather poor one, played in a tournament with two rounds per day) in the book is to show once again that the transfer of the black knight to f4 is not always an achievement for Black in the King's Indian.

10...♘c5?!

After the relatively better 10...♘f6, 11 h3 followed by 12 g3 would force Black to place his minor pieces awkwardly by 12...♘4h5.

11 ♗xc5 dxc5 12 h4!

Much stronger than 12 g3 ♘h3 13 ♘xh3 ♗xh3 14 ♗g4 with only a small advantage for White.

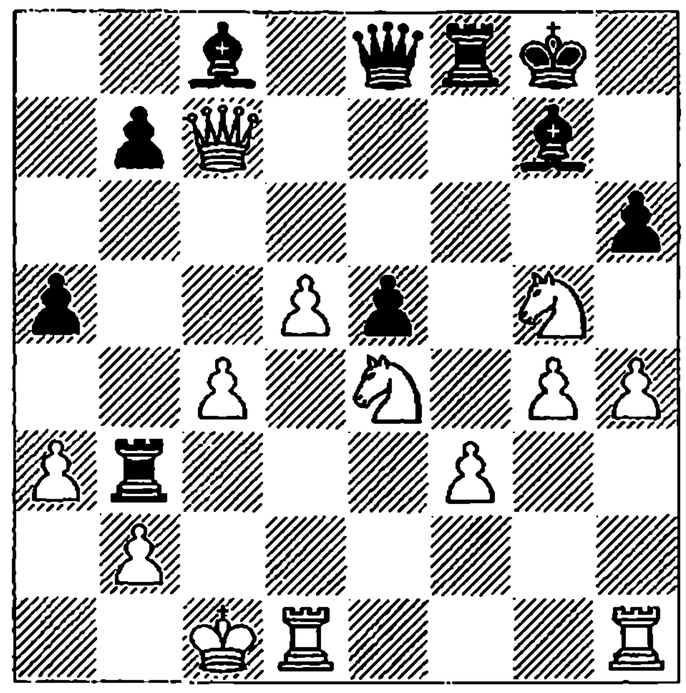
12...0-0

Black goes for a pawn sacrifice. Nothing good for him can be seen in the line 12...g5 13 hxg5 ♕xg5 14 g3 ♘g6 15 ♘b5, when White dominates.

13 g3 ♘h5 14 ♗xh5 gxh5 15 ♕xh5 f5 16 ♘f3! ♖a6 17 ♘g5 ♖h6 18 ♕f3 fxe4?! 19 ♕e3! ♗g4 20 ♘cxe4

Black has not managed to gain compensation and is objectively lost. On the following moves, Black tries in bizarre fashion to activate at least some of his pieces, while White collects two more pawns.

20...♖b6 21 f3! ♗f5 22 g4 ♗c8 23 0-0-0 ♕e8 24 ♕xc5 ♖b4 25 a3 ♖b3 26 ♕xc7 h6 *(D)*


W

The second lesson in this game was learned not by me but by my future team-mate in the Stuttgart Bundesliga team, IM Frank Zeller. As long as Black has some potentially active pieces, the fight in the King's Indian is not yet over!

27 ♘d6?!

The first step in the wrong direction. The simplest was 27 ♘e6! ♗xe6 28 dxe6 ♕xe6 29 ♖d7 with absolute domination (Zeller).

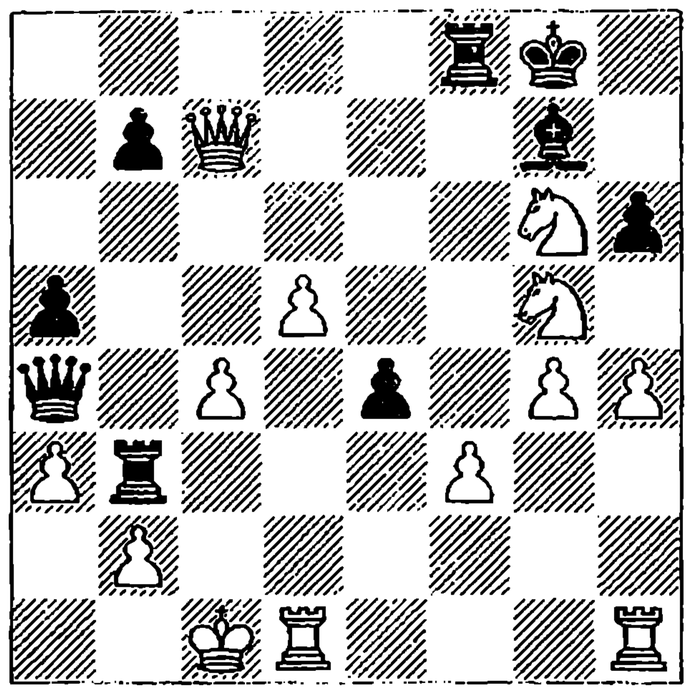
27...♕a4 28 ♘xc8?

A greedy move, which allows Black to activate the KI bishop. 28 ♘ge4! would have consolidated White's decisive advantage.

28...e4! 29 ♘e7+ ♔h8 30 ♘g6+ ♔g8 31 ♘c7+ ♔h8 32 ♘g6+ ♔g8 *(D)*

Black has obtained real counterplay and the way to victory for White, which still exists, lies within a mass of complex variations.

33 ♖d2

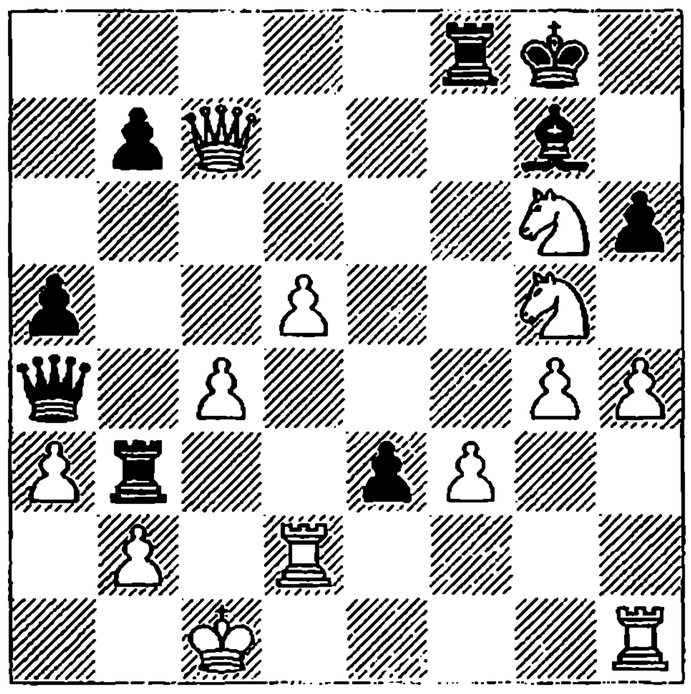


W

33 ♖d4? would lead to a draw after 33...♖xb2 (33...♖xa3!?) 34 ♕xg7+ ♔xg7 35 ♘e6+ ♔g8! 36 ♘e7+ ♔h8 37 ♘g6+ ♔g8 with the idea 38 ♔xb2? ♖xf3.

It seems that 33 ♖h2! was strong enough: 33...♗xb2+ (or 33...♖xa3 34 bxa3 ♕xa3+ 35 ♔d2, etc.) 34 ♖xb2 ♖c3+ 35 ♔b1 ♕xd1+ 36 ♔a2 ♖xa3+ 37 ♔xa3 ♕a1+ 38 ♔b3 ♕d1+ 39 ♖c2! (39 ♔c3?? ♕d3#) 39...♕b1+ 40 ♔c3 ♕a1+ 41 ♔d2 ♕d4+ 42 ♔e1 ♕g1+ 43 ♔e2 exf3+ 44 ♘xf3! ♕g2+ 45 ♔e1! ♕h1+ 46 ♔d2 ♖xf3 and after 47 ♕d8+!? followed by a few more precise moves White should win.

33...e3 34 ♘e7+ ♔h8 35 ♘g6+ ♔g8 *(D)*



W

36 ♖dh2?

The last, probably sufficient, chance for a win was 36 ♖d4! ♖xb2 (or 36...♖xa3 37 bxa3 ♕xa3+ 38 ♔d1 ♕a1+ 39 ♔e2 ♕b2+ 40 ♔xe3 ♗xd4+ 41 ♔e4) 37 ♕xg7+! ♔xg7 38 ♘e6+ ♔g8 39 ♔xb2 ♖xf3 and now 40 ♖f4!.

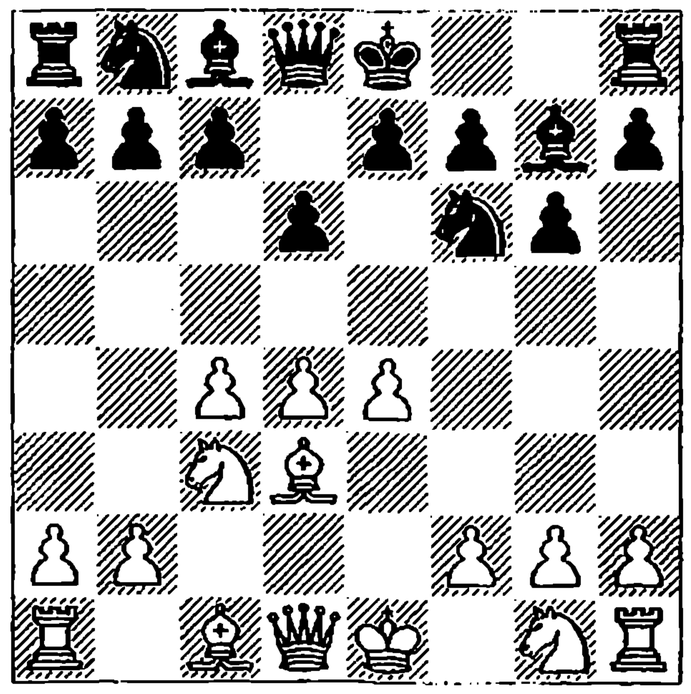
36...♖xa3! 37 ♘e7+

37 ♕xg7+ ♔xg7 38 ♘e6+ ♔xg6 39 ♘xf8+ ♔f7 40 bxa3 does not look like a winning attempt. Since no way to a clear advantage for White exists any more, he prefers to end a game with perpetual check.

37...♔h8 38 ♘g6+ ♔g8 39 ♘e7+ ♔h8 40 ♘g6+ ½-½

Game 36
I. Sokolov – Golubev
Bundesliga 2002/3

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 5 ♗d3 *(D)*



B

One more sideline, which from time to time occurs at grandmaster level.

5...0-0

Or 5...♘c6!? 6 ♘ge2 0-0.

6 ♘ge2!

The only logical continuation of White's plan. 6 ♘f3 ♗g4! looks good for Black.

6...♘c6!

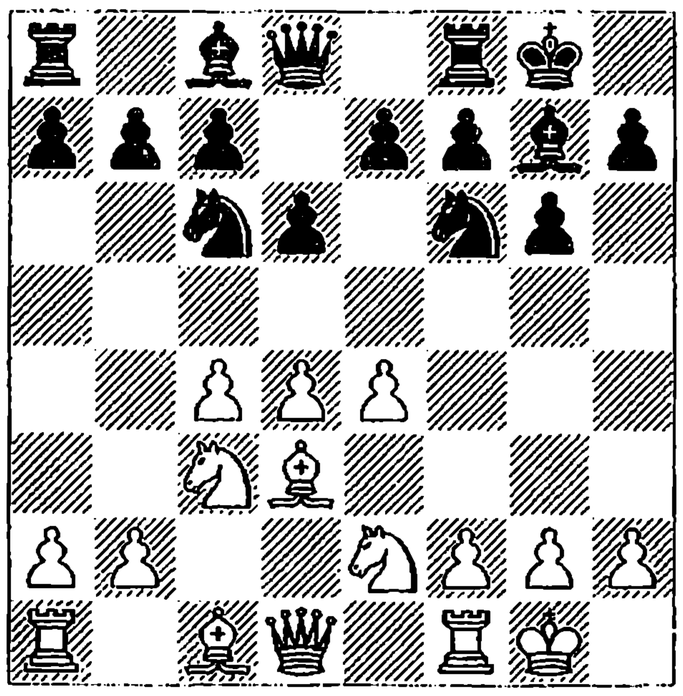
The most principled – Black intends to create counterplay by exploiting the vulnerability of the d4-pawn.

After 6...c5!? 7 d5 e6 8 0-0 exd5 (8...♘g4!? has also been tried at top level), if White does not wish to transpose to a Modern Benoni, he can continue 9 exd5, when 9...♘g4 10 f4 ♖e8 11 h3 seems to be a critical line. 11...♘h6 (11...♘e3!?) 12 ♗d2 (12 g4?! ♕h4!) 12...♘f5 13 ♕b3!? ♘a6 14 ♖ae1 ♖b8 15 a3 ♘c7 16 a4 ♗d7 was I.Sokolov-Radjabov, Sarajevo 2003 and here 17 ♗xf5! ♗xf5 18 ♘g3 ♕d7 19 ♘ce2 b6 20 ♘xf5 ♕xf5 21 ♘g3 ♕d7 22 f5 ♖xe1 23 ♖xe1 ♖e8 24 ♖f1, with slightly better chances for White, was suggested by I.Sokolov in *Informator*.

Sometimes Black opts for 6...e5 7 d5 – which is not so bad, but it seems to me that it is easier for White to fight for an advantage in this line.

7 0-0 *(D)*

B



Black has three major options here.

7...♘h5!?

I shall mainly consider this slightly artificial but topical move – without any confidence that other possibilities are weaker. After 7...e5 8 d5 ♘d4 (the most common) 9 ♘xd4 exd4 my concern has always been 10 ♘e2 (after 10 ♘b5 Black can continue with 10...♘e8!?, as Tkachev once played against Bareev or, as Kotronias plays, 10...♖e8 11 ♖e1 ♗d7! with excellent chances for equality) 10...♖e8 11 f3. I felt that Black is little worse in the static position after the usual 11...c5. But 11...♘d7!? with the idea of 12 b3 ♘c5 13 ♗b2 ♕g5!, as once showed to me by Ioannis Nikolaidis, might be interesting.

Another very playable line is 7...♘d7!? followed by ...e5. Note that after 8 ♗c2 e5 9 d5 Black can continue 9...♘d4!?, when after 10 ♘xd4 exd4 11 ♘b5 ♘e5 White does not win the pawn, Hort-Zsu.Polgar, Monaco Veterans-Women 1994.

8 ♗c2

8 d5!? ♘e5 9 f4 ♘xd3 10 ♕xd3 is little-studied, but quite critical. Then 10...f5!? (preventing 11 f5) 11 ♘d4 c5 12 dxc6 bxc6 13 ♗e3 ♗d7 14 exf5 gxf5 15 c5 e5 16 ♘de2 d5 17 fxe5 ♗xe5 18 ♗d4 ♗xd4+ 19 ♘xd4 ♕g5 20 ♖ae1 ♖ae8 allowed Black to obtain sufficient counterplay in Van der Werf-Gallagher, Cannes open 1997.

After 8 ♗e3 e5 9 d5 Black has so far had good results after both 9...♘d4 and 9...♘e7.

8...e5 9 d5

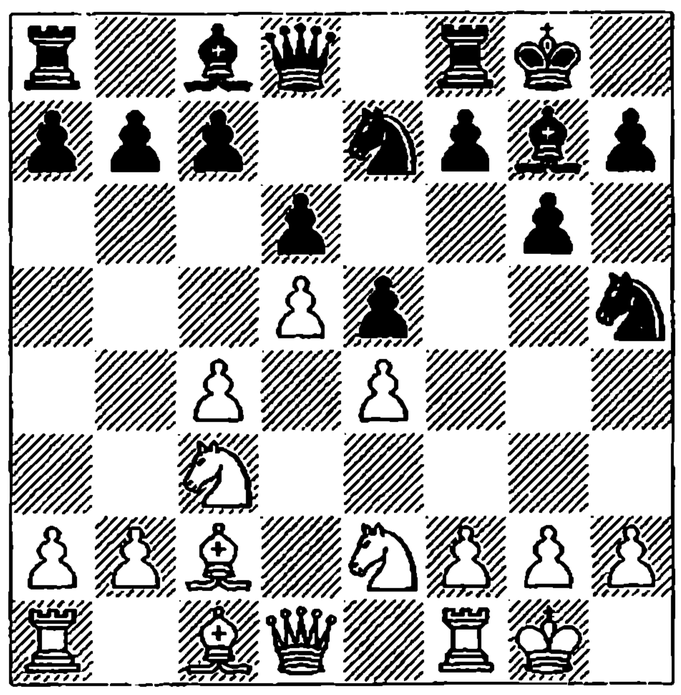
The rare 9 dxe5 should be answered by the simple 9...dxe5, equalizing. Instead, in Aleksandrov-Golubev, Nikolaev Z 1993 Black tried to show aggression by 9...♘xe5?! 10 b3 ♕h4 but after 11 ♗d2! (the idea was 11 f3 ♘g4!? 12 fxg4 ♗xg4) 11...♘g4 (11...f5!?) 12 h3 ♘e5 13 f4! ♗xh3? 14 ♕e1!! (stronger than 14 fxe5 ♗xg2 15 ♔xg2 ♕g4+ 16 ♔f2 ♕h4+ 17 ♔e3 ♗h6+ 18 ♔d3 ♕h3+ 19 ♘g3) 14...♕g4 15 ♕f2 f5 16 ♔h2 found himself in almost hopeless situation.

Also rare is 9 ♗e3!? exd4 (9...♘f4!?) 10 ♘xd4 ♘e5 11 ♕e2 ♘g4 12 ♖ad1! ♘xe3 13 ♕xe3 ♗d7 (insufficient is 13...c6?! 14 c5 ♕e7 15 cxd6 ♕xd6 16 ♘f5 ♕f4 17 ♘e7+! ♔h8 18 ♘xc8 or 13...♖e8 14 c5) 14 c5 dxc5 15 ♘f3 c6 16 ♕xc5 ♕c8 17 h3 ♗xh3 18 gxh3 ♕xh3 (18...♘f4? loses to 19 ♕d6!, Guigonis-Relange, Paris open 1998) 19 ♕e3 ♕g4+ 20 ♔h1 ♕h3+ with a draw.

9...♘e7 *(D)*

Not 9...♘d4? 10 ♘xd4 exd4 11 ♘b5.

W



10 a4

First used by Bareev in 1997. White plans to improve the coordination between his pieces by ♖a3. An example of unsuccessful play for White is 10 b4 f5 11 exf5 gxf5 12 ♘g3 ♘xg3 13 fxg3 e4 14 ♗b2 ♘g6 15 ♖b1 ♘e5 16 ♕e2 ♗d7 17 ♘d1 ♕g5 18 a4? (forgetting about the centre) 18...♖ae8 19 ♗c1 ♕g4 20 ♕xg4 ♘xg4 21 ♗b2 e3 with a clear advantage for Black, Bets-Golubev, Alushta 1999.

10 ♔h1!? was used by Sokolov after our game. 10...f5 (the waiting 10...a6 enabled Black to obtain counterplay in Flear-Hebden, French Cht 1998 after 11 ♖b1 ♔h8 12 b4 f5 13 exf5 gxf5 14 f4 ♘g6 15 fxe5 dxe5 16 c5 f4 17 ♘e1 ♗g4; worse is 10...c5?! 11 f4!, Conquest-Hebden, French Cht 1996/7) 11 exf5 ♘xf5 (11...gxf5 12 ♘g1! ♘f6 13 f4 e4 14 ♘h3!? was somewhat better for White in Atalik-Polzin, Greek Cht (Kallithea) 2003) 12 ♘e4 (12 g4? ♘xd4!! 13 gxh5 ♗g4!? 14 f4 ♕h4 15 ♘e1 exd4 16 hxg6

hxg6 17 ♕d2 ♘xe2 18 ♘xe2 ♖ae8 19 ♗d3 ♗e5 with an attack – Atalik) 12...♘f6 (after 12...♘f4 13 ♘xf4 exf4 14 ♗xf4 ♗xb2 15 ♖b1 ♗g7 16 ♗g5 ♕d7 17 c5 White developed an initiative in V.Georgiev-Balogh, Krynica Z 1998; Black could then try 17...♕f7!? 18 ♖e1 h6) 13 ♗g5 with a slight but stable advantage for White: 13...♕e8 14 ♕d2 (14 ♗xf6!? is also possible) 14...♘xe4 15 ♗xe4 ♗d7 16 ♖ae1, I.Sokolov-Spasov, Istanbul Ech 2003.

10...f5!?

Also here, Black has tried waiting moves: 10...♔h8 and 10...a5.

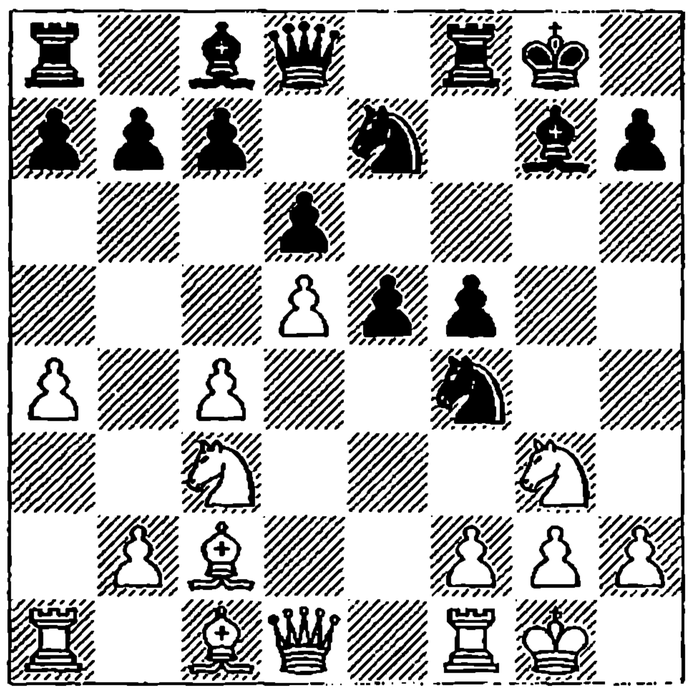
11 exf5 gxf5 12 ♘g3

The fresh idea 12 ♗g5!? h6 (12...f4?! 13 ♘g3! Hazai) 13 ♗h4 ♕e8 14 f3 ♘g6 15 ♗f2 was tested in I.Sokolov-Stellwagen, Dutch Ch (Leeuwarden) 2004 and here 15...♕e7!? deserved attention, improving the position of the queen and preventing c5 for the time being.

12...♘f4 *(D)*

The situation after 12...♘xg3 13 fxg3! (creating pressure against the f5-pawn) can be evaluated as slightly better for White, even if Black managed to outplay his opponent in Palliser-Nunn, British League (4NCL) 2000/1 after 13...♕e8 14 ♘b5 ♕d7 15 ♗e3 a6 16 ♘c3 ♕e8 17 c5 ♗d7 18 a5 ♘g6 19 cxd6 cxd6 20 ♘a4 e4 21 ♘b6 ♖d8 22 ♗g5?! ♗b5! 23 ♗xd8? ♗xf1 24 ♗c7 ♕e7 25 ♕xf1 ♗d4+ 26 ♔h1 ♕xc7.

W



13 ♖a3

The alternative is 13 ♘h5 ♘xh5 14 ♕xh5 ♘g6 15 f4, when the simple 15...exf4!? is good enough: 16 ♗xf4 (16 ♘e2 is met by 16...♘e5 or 16...♕e8) 16...♕f6 17 ♖ad1 ♘xf4 18 ♖xf4 ♕h6 19 ♖h4 ♕xh5 20 ♖xh5 ♗xc3 21 bxc3 ♗d7 and Black equalized in Korchnoi-Radjabov, Buenos Aires (Najdorf mem) 2001.

13...♘eg6 14 ♔h1

This move has not found any followers. Perhaps it is not such a good idea for White to ignore the f4-knight, since Black has possibilities to improve his position. 14 ♘ce2 has been tested in practice; then Nataf's suggestion 14...♗h6!? (keeping control over the f4-square) deserves attention: 15 ♘xf4 (15 ♔h1!? Atalik) 15...♗xf4 16 ♘h5 ♗xc1 17 ♕xc1 and now 17...f4! (preventing f4) with good play.

14...♕h4

Activating the queen and preventing ♘h5.

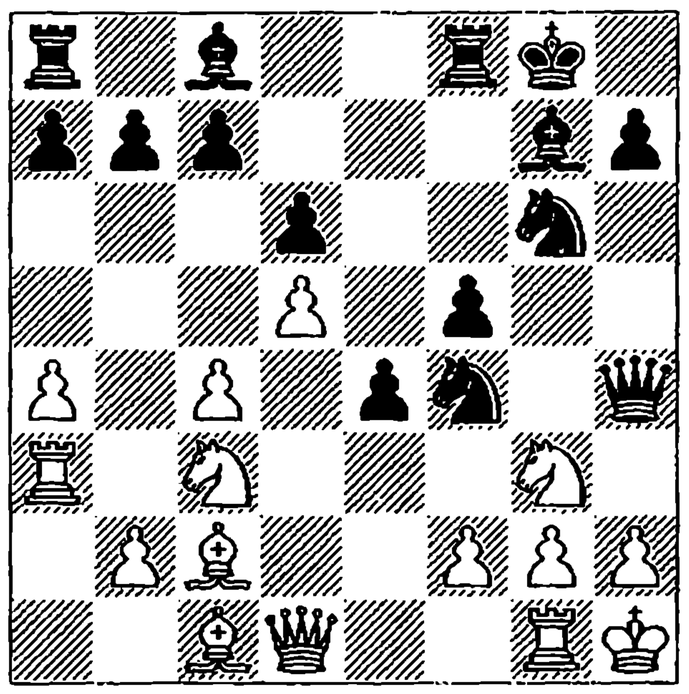
15 ♖g1

15 f3!? (I.Sokolov) is safer.

15...e4! *(D)*

A correct decision: Black is ready to fight for the initiative. Unfortunately, I spent too much time over the move. 15...♗h6?! is unpleasantly met by 16 ♘f1!, when 16...♕xf2 17 ♗e3! favours White: 17...♘h3 (17...♘d3 loses to 18 ♗xh6!) 18 gxh3 ♗xe3 19 ♖g2 winning the bishop (19...♕f4 20 ♘e2).

W



16 f3

16 ♘f1 could be answered by 16...♘d3 (16...♘e5!? 17 g3 ♘h3 18 gxh4 ♘xf2+ 19 ♔g2 ♘xd1 is interesting, but not 16...♕xf2?, which is refuted by 17 ♗e3 ♕h4 18 g3) 17 ♗xd3 exd3 18 f4 (18 ♘b5 is strongly met by 18...♘e5!) and now 18...♕g4!.

16...♗d7!?

The immediate 16...♘d3 17 ♗xd3 exd3 leads to double-edged play after 18 ♘b5!?.

17 ♘f1

Grabbing the pawn by 17 ♗xf4!? ♘xf4 18 fxe4 would at least be very dangerous for White in practice, even if playable. Black could answer 18...fxe4 (18...♖f6 19 ♕f3!? with the idea 19...♖h6 20 ♘f1) 19 ♘gxe4 ♗g4 20 ♕e1 ♕h5,

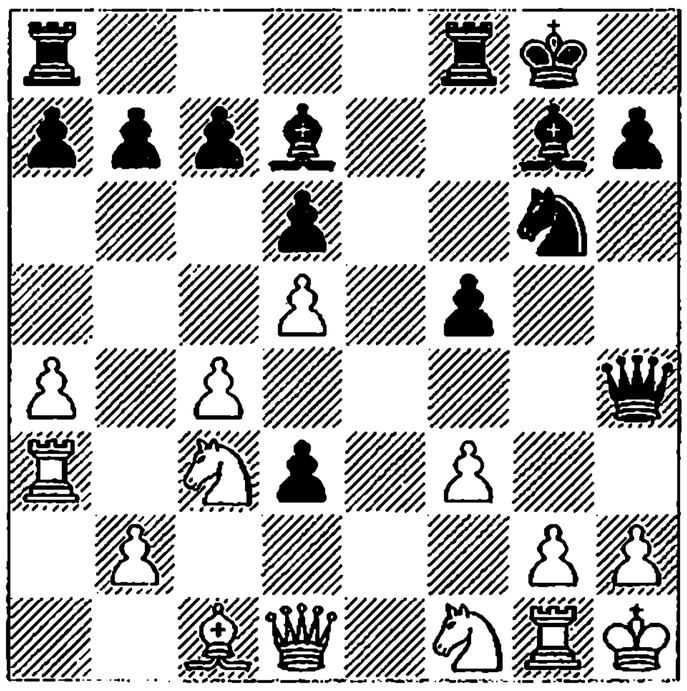
planning ...♖ae8. 17 fxe4? ♘e5! with the idea 18...♘g4 certainly could not suit White.

17...♘d3

Stronger than 17...exf3 18 ♕xf3 ♕g4 with chances for both sides.

18 ♗xd3 exd3 *(D)*

W



19 ♕xd3?

After this capture, Black is clearly better. 19 f4! (Buhmann) was necessary, and now after 19...♕f2 20 g3! ♖ae8 (20...♕d4!?) 21 ♕xd3! ♖e1 22 ♘d1! White miraculously consolidates, preserving the extra pawn. 19...♘xf4? loses to 20 g3. 19...♕g4! is correct, with somewhat better chances for Black; for example, 20 g3 ♗xc3 21 ♕xg4 fxg4 22 ♖xc3 ♗f5, threatening 23...♗e4+.

19...♘e5

In the post-mortem Sokolov suggested a good alternative: 19...♖ae8!? with the idea 20 g3 ♘e5 21 gxh4 ♘xd3 22 ♗h6 ♘f2+.

20 ♕d1

I expected 20 ♕c2!?.

20...♘xc4 21 ♖b3 ♘a5 22 ♖a3 ♖ae8!?

22...♘c4 would lead to a repetition, but I could not allow myself to make a draw in an almost dominating position. (After all, any team tolerates a fighting loss more than a suspicious draw agreement.)

23 ♘g3 ♖f6! *(D)*

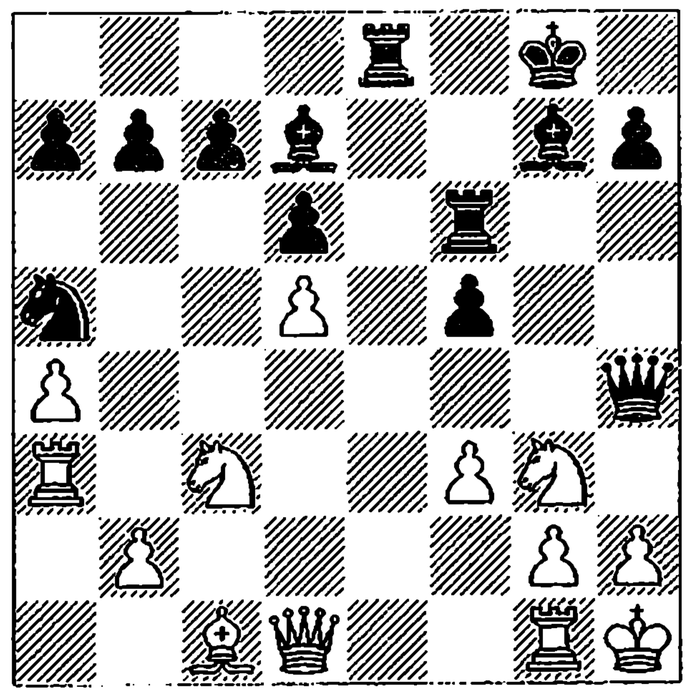
After 23...f4 24 ♘ge4 ♖e5 there is 25 g3 fxg3 26 ♖xg3, when White has some counterplay. But 23...♗e5!? (Hazai) is probably a good alternative.

24 ♘ce2!

24 ♖e1? ♖xe1+ 25 ♕xe1 loses to 25...f4 26 ♕e4 ♖h6 27 ♘f1 ♗xc3! (27...♕f2? 28 ♕e2) 28 ♖xc3 ♕f2 29 ♕d3 ♗h3! 30 gxh3 ♖g6.

24...♘c4!

W

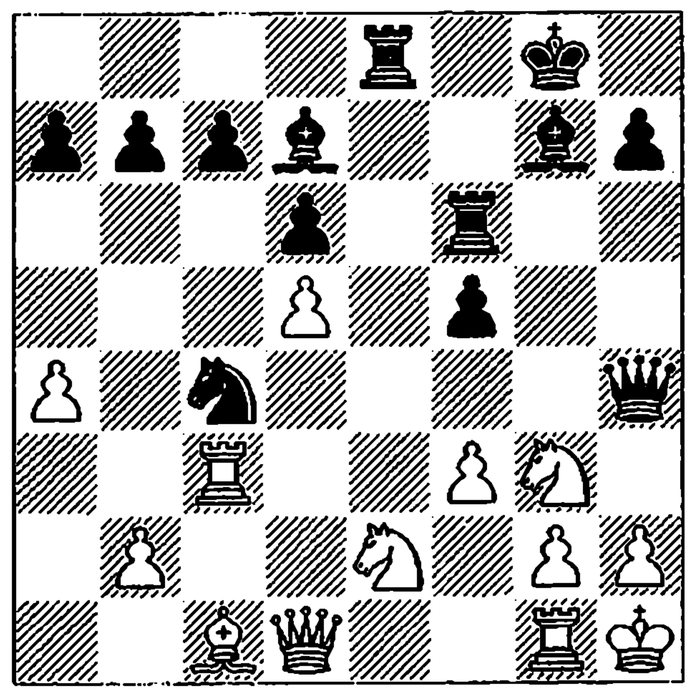


24...f4?! 25 ♘xf4! ♖xf4 26 ♗xf4 ♕xf4 27 ♘h5 would be rather unclear.

25 ♖c3!? *(D)*

From a practical viewpoint, a correct idea. After 25 ♖a1 any reasonable move would leave Black with a big advantage.

B



Now Black needs to make some very concrete decisions, and I had only 12 minutes left.

25...♖g6?!

Starting to lose control of the game. 25...f4! is correct, leading to a colossal advantage in all lines:

a) 26 ♖xc4? ♕xh2+ 27 ♔xh2 ♖h6+ 28 ♘h5 ♖xh5#.

b) 26 ♘xf4 ♖xf4 27 ♗xf4 ♗xc3 28 ♕e1 and here I did not see the nice winning move 28...♘e5!! (I considered only 28...♕d4 29 ♕g3 ♕d4 30 ♖d1 ♕c5 31 ♘e1 and 28...♕d4 29 ♗g5, which are less clear) and now 29 ♗g5 and 29 ♕g3 are both answered by 29...♘d3! when White can resign.

c) 26 ♘f1 ♕f2 27 ♘xh2 ♕xh2+ 28 ♔f1 ♖h6+ gives Black a big advantage. 28...♖g6 is what Sokolov intended to play, but also here Black has a clear win: 27...♖xf4! (simpler than 27...♕xh2+ with the

idea 28 ♗xb2 ♖xf4 29 ♖xc7 ♕xb2 30 ♖xd7 ♖d4!, which was found during the post-mortem; after 27...♖e1? 28 ♕xe1 ♕xe1 29 ♖xc4 White has compensation for the queen – Sokolov) 28 ♗xf4 ♗xc3 29 bxc3 ♖e1 30 ♕d3 and now 30...♘b2! decides.

26 ♕c2! ♗xc3 27 ♕xc3

I totally forgot that White could simply ignore the threat and sacrifice the exchange. Objectively, his compensation is not sufficient and Black is still better. But in the following chaotic part of the game I simply did not have enough time to make correct decisions.

27...♘b6?!

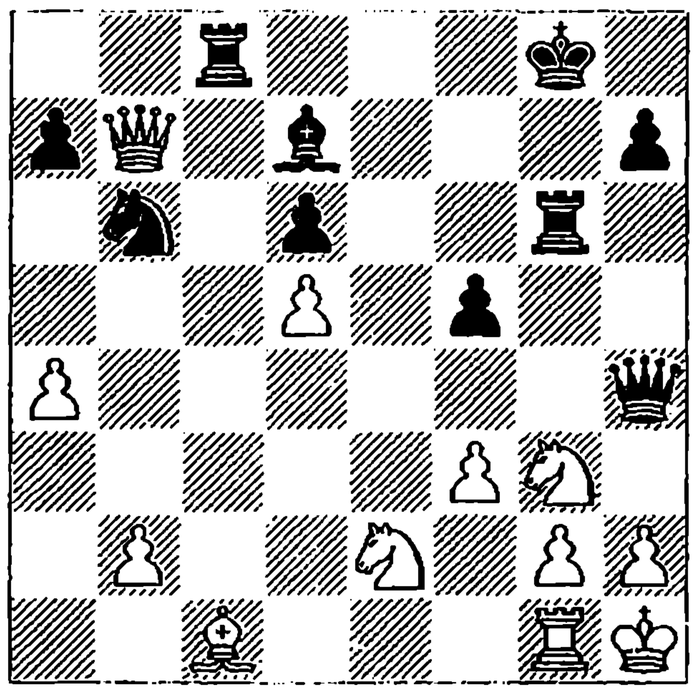
Both 27...♘e5!? and 27...c5!? were better options.

28 ♕xc7 ♖c8?

Just a bad move: White simply takes a pawn, and the position of the black pieces is not improved.

29 ♕xb7 *(D)*

B



29...♖g7?!

29...♖c4!? is better, threatening 30...♕xh2+ 31 ♔xh2 ♖h4#.

30 ♕xa7

White is already better.

30...♘xd5

30...♕b4!? could have been preferred.

31 ♕a5

31 ♖d1!? is also promising, with the idea 31...♗xa4 32 ♕a6!.

31...♕c4 32 b3?

A miscalculation. After 32 ♗h6! ♖f7 33 ♖c1 ♕h4 the only thing for Black to be happy about is that he is not losing by force.

32...♕xb3 33 ♘d4 ♕a2!

Black indirectly protects the f5-pawn.

34 ♗h6

34 ♘dxf5?? ♗xf5 35 ♘xf5 ♕xg2+! 36 ♖xg2 ♖xc1+ and Black mates.

34...♖f7 35 ♕e1

Now the position is rather unclear.

35...♖e8

Also possible is 35...♕c4!? (Sokolov) or 35...♘e7!? followed by ...♘g6 and ...♕d5 (Andersson).

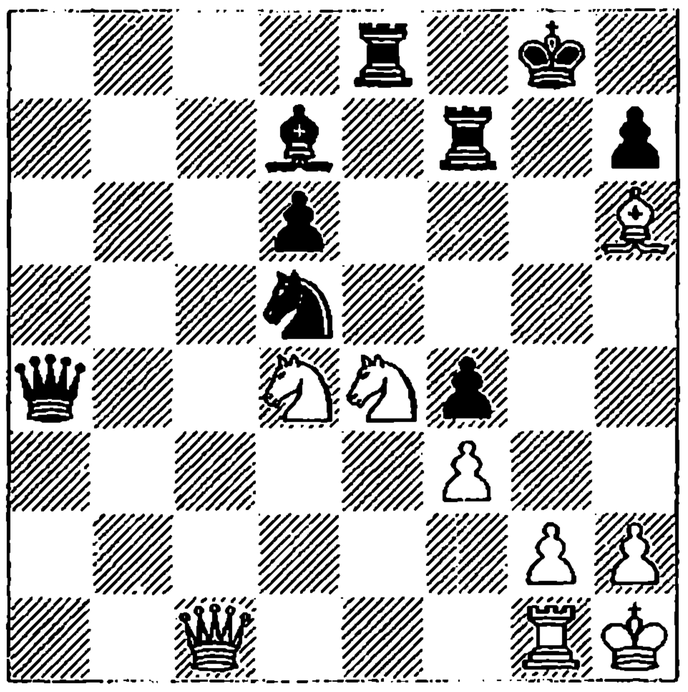
36 ♕c1 f4?!

After 36...♖f6!? Black may even be slightly better.

37 ♘e4 ♕xa4? *(D)*

Again giving White the initiative. After 37...♖c8! White's advantage is under question.

W



38 ♕d2?!

Not bad, but 38 ♕b2! was even stronger.

38...♖xe4!?

38...♕a8 with the idea 39 ♘xd6?! ♖f6 40 ♘xe8 ♖xh6 = (*Fritz*) is hard to find. I managed to calculate only 38...♕b4?! 39 ♕xb4 ♘xb4 40 ♘xd6 ♖f6 41 ♘xe8 ♖xh6 42 ♘c7 – and decided to give back the exchange.

39 fxe4 ♘e3?

A decisive blunder. Black had only a few seconds left until the control on move 40. After 39...♘f6! Black would retain significant defensive resources.

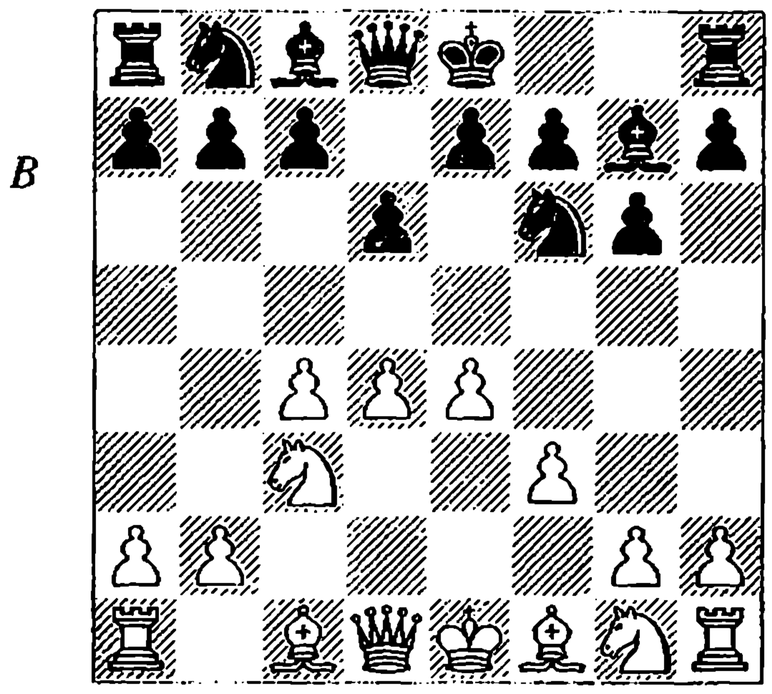
40 ♗xf4!

Now White is winning.

40...♘g4 41 h3 ♘f6 42 ♖e1 ♕a8 43 ♘f5 ♗xf5 44 exf5 ♘e4 45 ♕d4 d5 46 ♖b1 ♖f8 47 ♗h6 ♖f6 48 ♕e5 1-0

10 The Sämisch

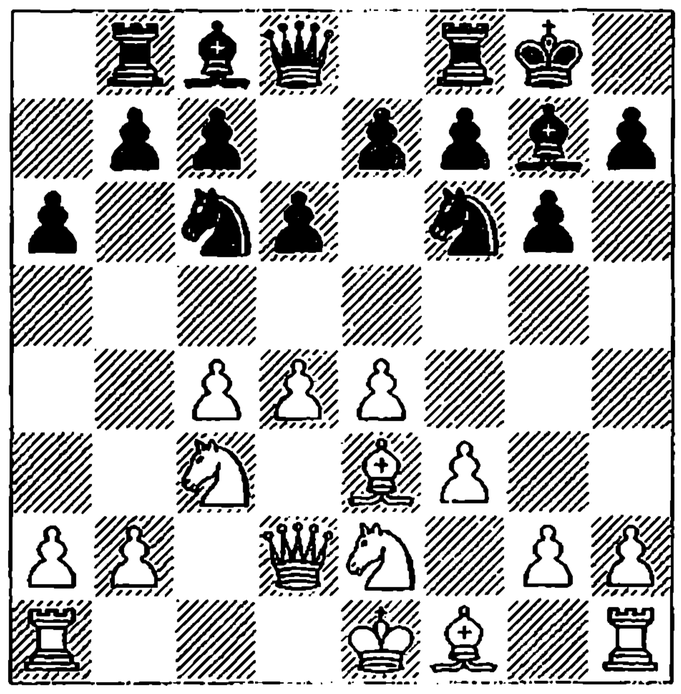
1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 5 f3 *(D)*



The Sämisch has always been one of White's main weapons against the King's Indian. By playing 5 f3 White supports his pawn-centre and solves any problems with the development of his dark-squared bishop: it is usually placed on e3 on the next move, but also in cases where White develops the bishop to g5, the reaction ...h6, typical in other systems, would not make so much sense for Black. It must be added that, depending on Black's actions, White can prepare either queenside castling (♗e3/♗g5, ♕d2 and 0-0-0) or kingside castling (♗d3, ♘ge2 and 0-0).

In the majority of cases, play continues **5...0-0 6 ♗e3** and now Black must choose between several very different plans. One of them is 6...e5, while another is 6...c5 (offering a pawn sacrifice). Black can also prepare ...b5 by 6...a6 and 7...c6, make the move 6...♘bd7, which can be linked with various ideas, or he can play **6...♘c6!?** with the main continuation **7 ♕d2 a6 8 ♘ge2 ♖b8** *(D)*, which has always been my favourite way to meet the Sämisch.

I shall concentrate mainly on this, one of Black's most popular systems, which, despite its slight eccentricity, is fun to play and was used, for example, by the young Kasparov and by the old Fischer, to say nothing of John Nunn's great achievements in this line. In quite a few games I also experimented with an early ...a6 +

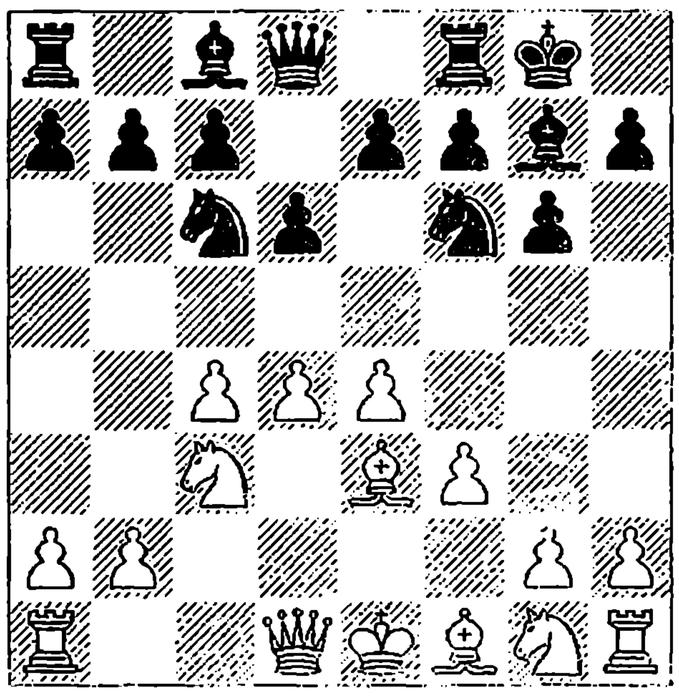


...c6 and will add references to these games. With respect to current theoretical trends, which make the move 6...c5 (in answer to either 6 ♗e3, 6 ♗g5 or 6 ♘ge2) Black's most important weapon at the top levels, I have also included one game where I opted for 6 ♗e3 c5. Curiously enough, 6...c5 is the only major move in this position that Kasparov never used in his practice!

Game 37
Nenashev – Golubev
Alushta 1994

Note that my opponent in this game is now known by the name Alexander Graf, following his relocation to Germany.

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 5 f3 0-0 6 ♗e3 ♘c6 *(D)*



The idea of Black's set-up is primarily prophylactic. For the moment, he does not wish to play 7...e5 8 d5 ♘d4 (e.g. after 7 ♕d2) because White has 9 ♘ge2, and Black is forced to exchange his knight. However, after 7 ♗d3?!, 7...e5! and 8...♘d4 works well for Black. If White wishes to fight for the advantage, he should play ♘ge2 at an early stage (thereby interfering with the development of his king's bishop), while Black will prepare to attack on the queenside (where White generally intends to place his king) by ...a6 and ...♖b8, planning ...b5. Note that the idea of ...e5 and (after d5) ...♘e7 rarely helps Black to solve his problems in this system. It deserves attention mainly in cases where White cannot castle queenside (e.g., after an early ♖b1).

7 ♘ge2

Following 7 ♗d3?! e5! 8 d5 (not 8 ♘ge2? ♘g4!) 8...♘d4 9 ♘ge2 Black should decide between 9...♘h5, 9...♘e8 and 9...♘d7, which is probably the most solid: 10 ♘b5 (10 ♗c2 ♕h4+! 11 ♗f2 ♕g5) 10...♘xe2 11 ♕xe2 a6 12 ♘c3 (12 ♘a7 ♖xa7! 13 ♗xa7 b6) and now the typical 12...♗h6! with the idea 13 ♗xh6 ♕h4+ equalizes.

After 7 ♕d2 a6, 8 ♘ge2 is usual and is considered in later games. Other moves are rare:

a) 8 ♖b1 ♖b8 9 b4 e5 10 d5 ♘d4!? 11 ♘ge2 c5 12 dxc6 bxc6 13 ♘xd4 exd4 14 ♗xd4 ♖e8 15 ♗e2?! (15 ♗d3!?) 15...c5 16 bxc5 ♘xe4!! 17 fxe4 ♕h4+ and Black is better: 18 g3?! (18 ♔f1 ♖xb1+ 19 ♘xb1 ♕xe4 20 ♗xg7 ♕xb1+ 21 ♕d1 ♕f5+ 22 ♗f3 ♔xg7 23 cxd6, Quigley-Henry, Chicago 1987, and now 23...♕f4!?) 18...♖xb1+ 19 ♔f2 ♖b2!, Lputian-Kasparov, Tbilisi jr 1976.

b) 8 0-0-0 allows 8...b5!? 9 cxb5 axb5 10 ♗xb5 ♘a5!, as in Petursson-Gufeld, Hastings 1986/7, when Black has good attacking prospects on the queenside.

7...a6 *(D)*

Now the standard move is 8 ♕d2, which we shall consider in later games.

8 a3

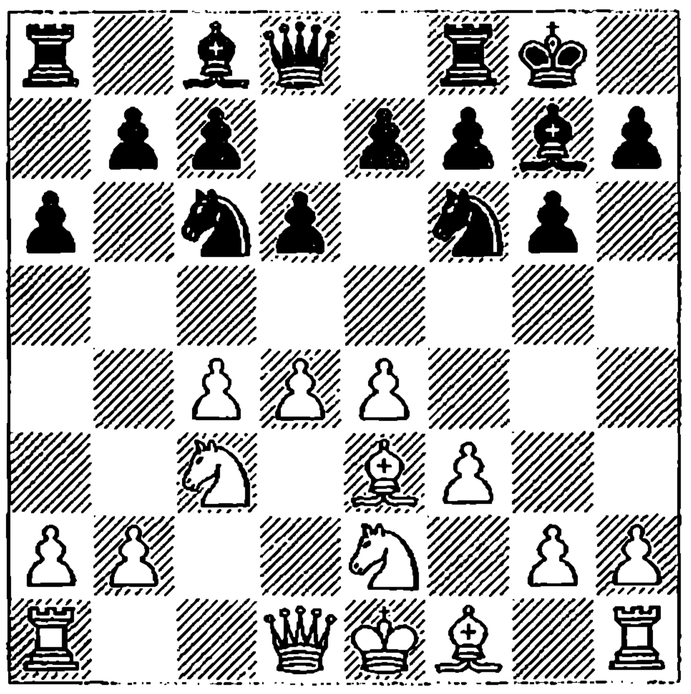
There are many alternatives to 8 ♕d2, but none of them is popular.

a) 8 ♖b1 ♖b8 (8...b5?! is dubious because after 9 cxb5 axb5 10 ♘xb5, 10...♖xa2 fails to 11 ♘a3 and the rook is trapped; after 8...♖e8 9 b4, unlike in the 8 a3 line, 9...e5 10 d5 ♘d4? 11 ♘xd4 exd4 12 ♗xd4 ♘xe4? does not work for Black because after 13 fxe4 ♕h4+ 14 g3 ♖xe4+ 15 ♗e2 ♖xd4 16 gxh4 ♖xd1+ 17 ♘xd1 the white rook is safe on b1) 9 b4 e5!? 10 d5 ♘e7 11 ♘g3 ♘e8 12 ♗d3 f5 13 ♗f2. This non-standard position occurred in Kuzubov-Graf, Warsaw Ech 2005. Perhaps Black could try 13...c6!? with reasonable counterplay.

b) After 8 ♘c1, a kind of main line is 8...e5 9 d5 ♘d4 10 ♘b3 ♘xb3 11 ♕xb3 c5!? 12 dxc6 bxc6 13 0-0-0 ♕e7 (13...♗e6 14 ♕a3! ♘e8 15 h4 with some pressure, Spassky-Korchnoi, Kiev Ct (7) 1968) 14 ♕b6 (after 14 c5 d5 15 exd5 cxd5 16 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 17 ♕xd5 ♗e6, with the idea 18 ♕d6 ♕h4!, Black has compensation) 14...♗b7 15 g4 ♖fb8 (15...♖ab8?! 16 h4 ♖fc8 17 h5 ♘d5?! 18 exd5 cxd5, Timman-Kasparov, Moscow 1981, is refuted by 19 cxd5!) 16 h4 a5 (16...d5?! 17 ♗c5!) 17 ♕b3 (Burger-Arnlind, corr. 1982-8) and here 17...d5! 18 cxd5 cxd5 19 exd5 a4 gives Black a lot of play.

c) The rare 8 h4!? h5 9 ♘c1 *(D)* was tested three times in the 1992 match between Fischer and Spassky:

W



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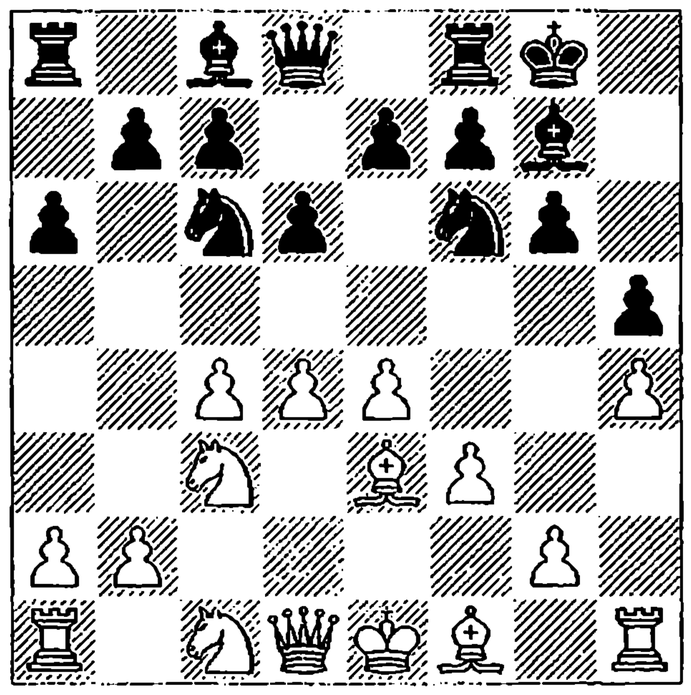

c1) 9...♘d7 10 ♘b3 a5 11 a4 ♘b4 12 ♗c1 b6 (12...e5 13 d5 looks somewhat better for

White) 13 g4 hxg4 14 fxg4 c5 and here 15 d5! (instead of 15 h5?! cxd4 16 ♘xd4 ♘c5! 17 ♘d5 ♗b7, Spassky-Fischer, Sveti Stefan/Belgrade (30) 1992) 15...♘e5 16 h5 looks very strong: 16...♗xg4 17 ♗xg4 ♘bd3+ (Ftačnik) is refuted by 18 ♔e2! ♘xb2 19 ♕g1! and Black will be crushed on the kingside.

c2) 9...e5 10 d5 ♘d4 (10...♘e7!? 11 ♗e2 ♘h7 12 ♘d3 f5 13 a4 ♘f6 14 ♘f2 a5 15 ♕c2 was quite pleasant for White in Spassky-Fischer, Sveti Stefan/Belgrade (12) 1992) 11 ♘b3 ♘xb3 (11...c5 12 dxc6 bxc6 13 ♘xd4 exd4 14 ♗xd4 ♖b8 15 ♕d2 transposes to note 'b4' to White's 9th move in Game 38) 12 ♕xb3 c5!? (12...♔h7 13 ♗e2 ♗h6 14 ♗xh6 ♔xh6 15 0-0-0 ♔g7 16 ♔b1 ♕e7 17 ♖dg1 ♖h8 18 g4 and White had the initiative in Spassky-Fischer, Sveti Stefan/Belgrade (28) 1992) 13 dxc6 bxc6 14 0-0-0 should be compared with the analogous position from line 'b'. After 14...♕e7 15 c5 d5 16 exd5 cxd5 17 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 18 ♕xd5 ♗e6 19 ♕d6, the move ...♕h4 is not available, but it seems that 19...♕b7 gives Black compensation anyway.

d) 8 d5 was employed several times by Seirawan, but such an early advance cannot create serious problems for Black: 8...♘e5 9 ♘g3 (9 ♘d4 c5! 10 ♘c2 e6) 9...c6 10 a4 (10 ♗e2 b5!) 10...cxd5 11 cxd5 e6 12 ♗e2 exd5 13 exd5 ♖e8 14 ♕d2 ♕c7!? (after 14...♕e7?! 15 ♔f2! h5 16 ♖he1 h4 17 ♘f1 {Seirawan-Nunn, Brussels (SWIFT) 1988} or 14...♕a5 15 0-0 ♗d7 16 b4! ♕xb4 17 ♖ab1 ♕h4 18 ♘ge4 ♘xe4 19 ♘xe4 ♘g4! {Seirawan-Gufeld, Seattle open 1989} 20 ♗f4! ♘f6 21 ♖xb7 White's chances can be preferred, but 14...♗d7!? is not bad) 15 0-0 ♘c4 16 ♗xc4 ♕xc4 17 ♘ge4 ♘xe4 18 ♘xe4 ♕b3 and Black equalizes – Nunn.

8...♗d7

After 8...♖b8 9 b4 White's idea is that 9...b5?! is met by 10 cxb5 axb5 11 d5! ♘e5 12 ♘d4.

Of interest is 8...♖e8!? 9 b4 e5 10 d5 ♘d4 11 ♖a2 (now 11 ♘xd4 exd4 12 ♗xd4 ♘xe4!! 13 fxe4 ♕h4+ 14 g3 ♖xe4+ works well for Black) 11...a5 12 ♔f2 axb4 13 axb4 ♖xa2 14 ♘xa2 ♘xe4+! 15 fxe4 ♕h4+ 16 ♔g1 (16 ♘g3 f5!; 16 g3? ♕xe4 17 ♗g2 ♕f5+ 18 ♔g1 ♘f3+ 19 ♗xf3 ♕xf3) 16...♕xe4, Agdestein-Djurhuus, Norwegian Ch (Gausdal) 1994. Black has two pawns for a knight, and his pieces are very active.

9 b4 *(D)*

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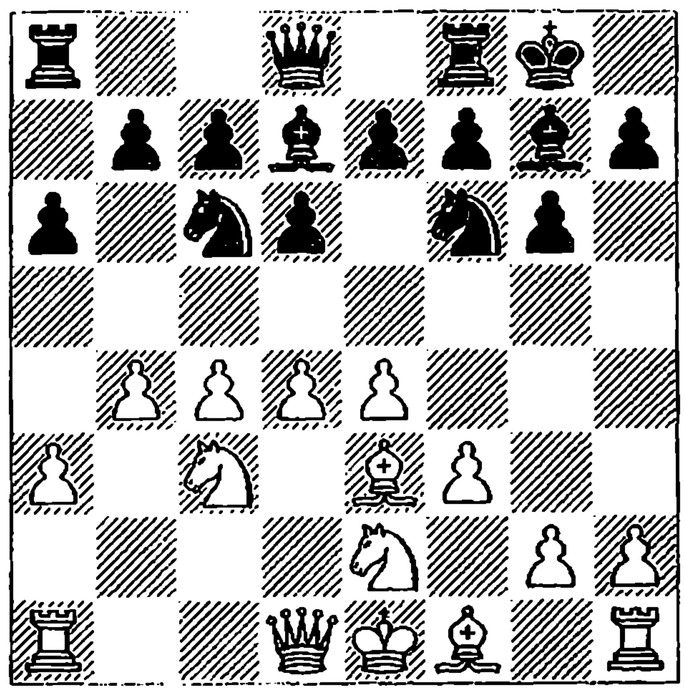


9...♕b8!?

This odd-looking move was Geller's main recommendation in his 1980 King's Indian book.

Still, 9...♖e8!? is more normal: 10 g3 (or: 10 ♘c1 e5 11 d5 ♘d4 12 ♘b3 c5!; 10 g4?! e5! 11 d5 ♘d4 12 ♘xd4 exd4 13 ♗xd4 ♘xe4! is very good for Black) 10...b5 11 cxb5 (11 c5 a5 12 ♖b1 axb4 13 axb4 dxc5 14 dxc5 {Gheorghiu-Quinteros, Moscow IZ 1982} and now Black should play 14...♘e5!? 15 ♗g2 ♘c4) 11...axb5 12 ♗g2 e5 13 d5 ♘e7 14 0-0 c6 and Black is OK, Spassky-Nezhmetdinov, USSR Ch (Baku) 1962.

9...e5!? 10 d5 ♘e7 11 g4 ♘e8 12 ♘c1 f5 13 ♘b3 c6 (13...fxg4!? 14 fxg4 ♖f4 deserves attention, as suggested by Karpov & Razuvaev) 14 g5 cxd5 15 cxd5 ♗h8 16 ♕d2 ♘g7 17 0-0-0 was somewhat better for White, though still complex, in Korchnoi-Stein, USSR Ch (Leningrad) 1963.

10 ♘c1

Later I faced 10 ♖b1!? b5 11 c5! dxc5 12 bxc5 ♖d8 13 g3 (13 e5 ♘e8 14 f4 ♗h6!?; 13 ♕c1!?, Bischoff-Bezler, Austrian Cht 1997/8) 13...♗e6 (13...♘a5!? is objectively better) 14 ♗g2?! (14 d5! ♘e5 15 ♘d4! and White should not be afraid of 15...♗xd5?! 16 exd5 ♘xd5 17 ♘xd5 ♖xd5, when 18 f4! gives him a clear advantage) 14...♗c4! 15 ♕c2 (15 0-0 ♘xd4! 16 ♘xd4 e5) 15...♘d7! 16 f4 (or: 16 0-0 e5 17 d5 ♘d4; 16 ♖d1 b4) 16...e5! 17 fxe5 ♘dxe5 18 dxe5 ♗d3 19 ♕a2 ♗xb1 20 ♕xb1 ♘xe5 with full positional compensation for the slight material deficit, Bischoff-Golubev, Tauberbischofsheim rpd 1997.

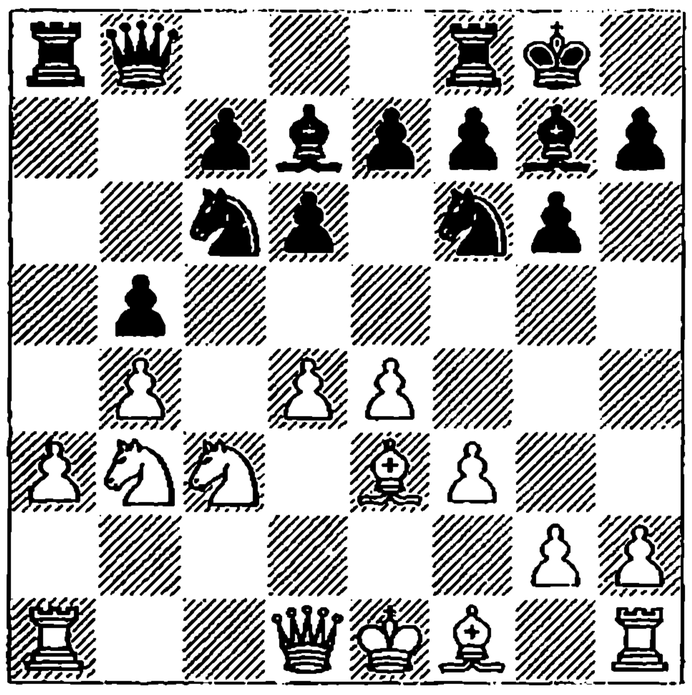
10...b5 11 cxb5

After 11 ♘b3 Black has 11...bxc4 12 ♗xc4 ♘xb4! 13 axb4 (the untested 13 c5!? ♘e8 14 0-0 ♘c6 15 f4 gives White compensation for the pawn) 13...♕xb4 14 ♕d3 d5!, regaining the piece (15 exd5 ♗f5!).

11...axb5 12 ♘b3! *(D)*

After 12 ♗xb5 ♘xb4 13 ♗xd7 ♘xd7 14 ♘1e2 ♘a6 or 12 ♘xb5 ♘xb4 13 ♖b1 ♘a6 Black has decent play.

B



12...e5 13 d5 ♘e7 14 ♗d3!

White prepares to attack the b5-pawn by ♕e2. After 14 ♗e2 ♖d8!? 15 0-0 c6 16 dxc6 ♗xc6 17 ♘a5 ♗e8 18 ♕b3 d5 19 ♗c5 ♘c6! Black had no problems in Brunner-Xie Jun, Berne (3) 1995.

14...♘h5!

Now 15 ♕e2?! will be met by 15...♘f4. Instead, 14...♖d8?! 15 ♕e2! c6 16 dxc6 ♗xc6 17 ♗xb5 d5 18 ♗c5 favours White, while after 14...c6 15 dxc6 ♗xc6 White still develops some pressure by 16 ♘a5!.

15 g3!?

Preventing ...♘f4 for ever.

15...f5 16 ♕e2

A principled move – White goes after the b5-pawn, at the cost of leaving his king in the centre. The alternative is 16 0-0 with similarly unclear consequences because Black has attacking chances on the kingside; e.g., 16...f4 17 ♗f2 fxg3 18 hxg3 g5.

16...fxe4 17 fxe4 c6!

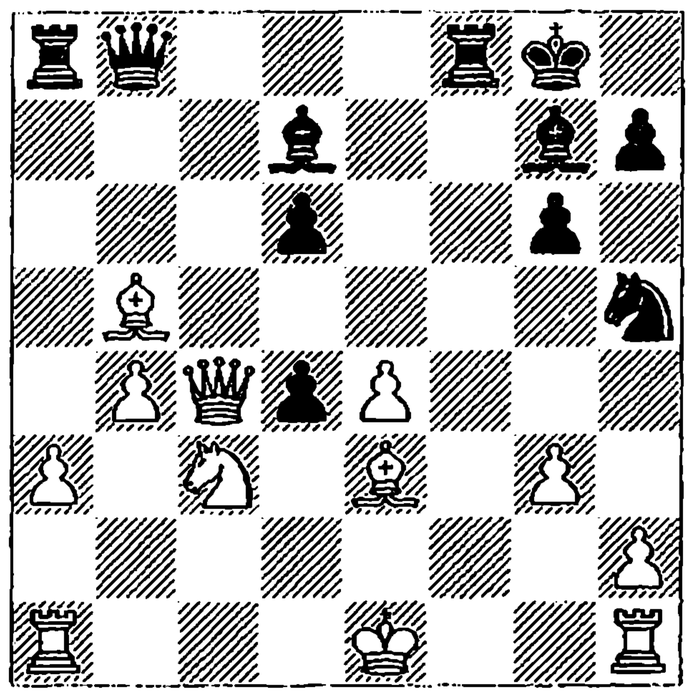
Black could have saved the b5-pawn only by 17...♘f6 18 0-0 ♗g4, which is certainly not an attractive option. Instead, he opens the centre.

18 dxc6 ♘xc6 19 ♗xb5

Another capture, 19 ♘xb5, is also possible. It seems that Black has enough compensation after 19...♘d4!? 20 ♘5xd4 exd4 21 ♗xd4 ♖xa3!.

19...♘d4 20 ♘xd4 exd4 21 ♕c4+! *(D)*

B



21...♖f7?

This self-pinning move is the worst of all the possibilities.

The most natural move, 21...♔h8, is playable: 22 ♗xd4 ♖c8 23 ♕d3 (after 23 ♗xg7 ♘xg7 24 ♕e2 ♖xc3 25 ♗xd7 ♖cxa3 26 ♖xa3 ♕xb4+ 27 ♔f2 ♖xa3 Black should be able to hold the position) 23...♖xc3 24 ♕xc3 ♗xb5 and White's king is still in the centre, which gives Black counterchances.

On the day after the game, Alexander told me that 21...♗e6 22 ♕xe6+ ♔h8 was better for Black. But now I am not able to find even equality after 23 ♗f2! dxc3 24 ♕c4! c2 (or: 24...♖c8 25 ♗c6!) 25 0-0!, etc.

However, it seems that an even crazier version of the same idea, 21...d5!? 22 ♕xd5 ♗e6! 23 ♕xe6+ ♔h8, works: 24 ♗f2 dxc3 25 ♕c4 ♖c8 26 ♕e2 (after 26 ♗c6? Black is especially happy that there is no pawn on d6: he plays 26...♕d6! 27 b5 ♕d2+ 28 ♔f1 ♖f8 with advantage) 26...c2 27 ♖c1 ♖xa3! 28 0-0 ♘xg3 (the passive knight enters the game) 29 hxg3 ♖xg3+ 30 ♗xg3 ♕xg3+ and every variation ends with perpetual check; for example, 31 ♔h1 (or 31 ♕g2 ♗d4+ 32 ♔h1 ♕h4+ 33 ♕h2 ♕xe4+) 31...♕h4+ 32 ♕h2! ♕xe4+ 33 ♕g2 ♕h4+.

22 ♗xd7 d5

22...dxe3 23 ♗e6 is just winning for White, but the text-move does not help much.

23 ♘xd5! dxe3 24 ♗e6! ♗xa1 25 ♗xf7+ ♔g7

After 25...♔xf7 26 0-0+ White regains the piece and wins easily.

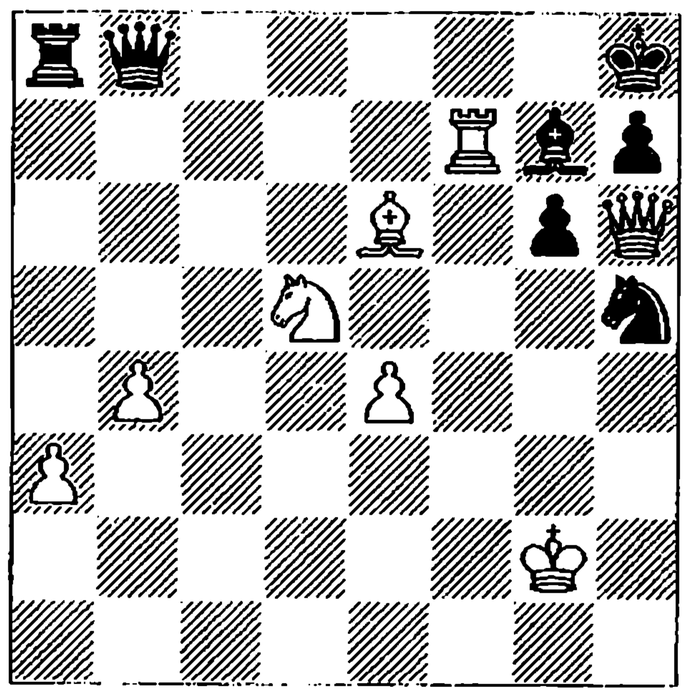
26 0-0 ♗e5 27 ♗e6 ♗xg3 28 ♕c3+ ♗e5 29 ♕xe3 ♗xh2+ 30 ♔g2 ♗e5 31 ♖f7+ ♔h8

White is a pawn up in an almost dominating position, but, in time-trouble, he blunders absolutely terribly.

32 ♕h6?!

Preparing a losing combination.

32...♗g7 *(D)*



33 ♖xg7?? ♕g3+

This simple check escaped White's attention. He saw only 33...♘xg7?? 34 ♘f6, when Black has no defence.

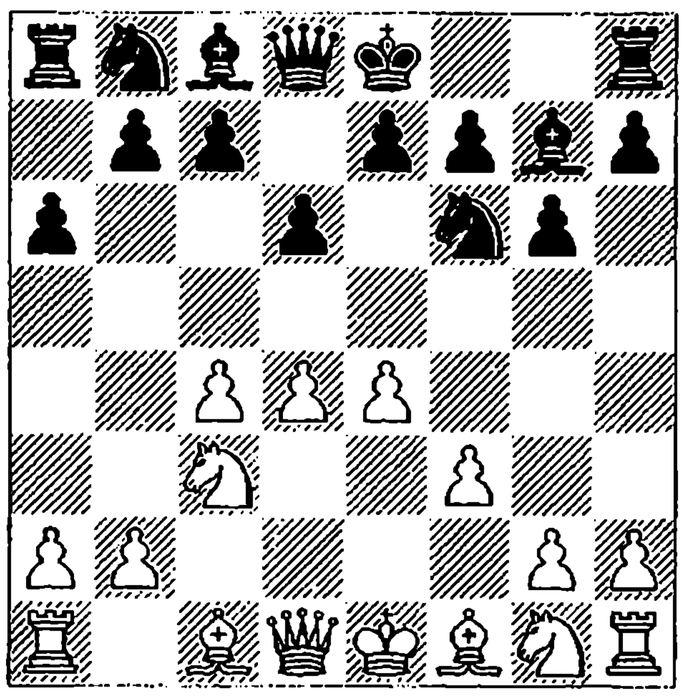
34 ♔h1 ♘xg7 35 ♕h3

35 ♘f6 ♕f3+ wins the knight.

35...♕e1+ 36 ♔g2 ♕xe4+ 0-1

Game 38
Atalik – Golubev
Bucharest 1996

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 5 f3 a6!? *(D)*



6 ♗e3

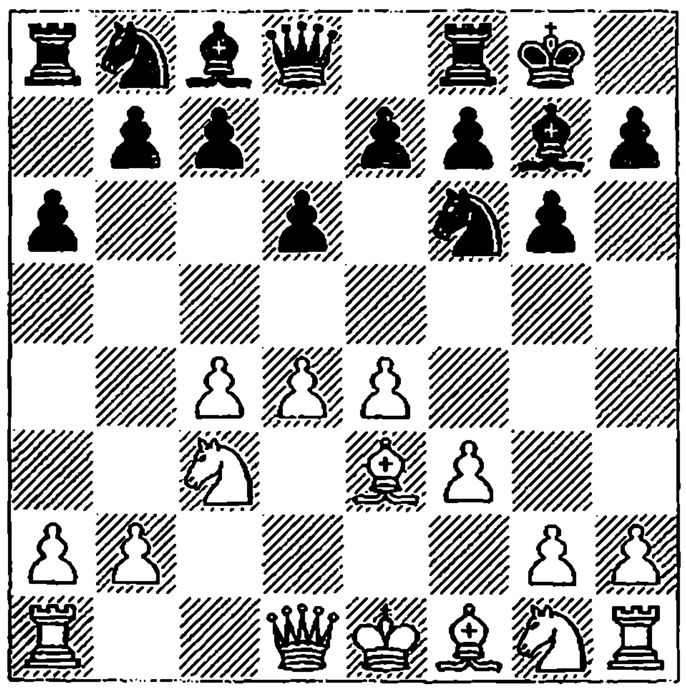
The game Co.Ionescu-Golubev in the same tournament continued 6 ♗g5 c6 7 ♘ge2 (7 ♕d2! is a more useful move here) 7...b5 8 ♘c1 0-0 9 ♘b3?!. White has spent three tempi moving this knight, but now Black disturbs it: 9...bxc4 10 ♗xc4 a5! 11 0-0 (11 a4!? is better, acquiescing to the weakening of the queenside) 11...a4 12 ♘c1 ♕a5 13 ♕d2 c5 (the initiative is with Black now) 14 d5 ♘bd7 15 a3 ♘e5 16 ♗e2 ♗a6 17 ♘d3 ♗xd3 18 ♗xd3 ♘xd3 19 ♕xd3 ♖fb8 20 ♕d2?! ♘d7! 21 ♖ac1 (21 ♗xe7 ♘e5 22 ♗xd6? ♘c4 23 ♕f4 ♖xb2) 21...♘e5 22 ♗xe7 ♕a6! with fantastic compensation for the pawn.

Another encounter featuring the ...a6, ...c6 theme was Arbakov-Golubev, Melle rpd 1998. GM Valentin Arbakov was a legendary blitz player who, however, made moves of almost the same quality with any time-limit. I won our two games with a long time-limit, but lost my two rapid games against him. 6 ♘ge2 c6 7 a4!? a5 8 ♗e3 0-0 9 ♕d2 ♘a6 10 ♖d1 ♖e8?! (10...♕c7 is probably better, preparing 11...e5, I.Sokolov-Nunn, Belgrade 1991) 11 ♘c1 ♘b4 12 ♗e2 d5 13 cxd5 cxd5 14 e5 ♘d7 15 b3 ♘f8 16 ♗b5 (16 0-0 is preferable) 16...♗d7 17 0-0 ♖c8 18 ♗e2!? f6 19 f4 ♗f5 20 ♘d3 ♘e6 21 ♖c1 ♗xd3 (starting a risky exchanging operation) 22 ♗xd3 fxe5 23 fxe5 ♘xd3 24 ♕xd3 ♗xe5 25 dxe5 d4 26 ♗h6! dxc3 27 ♕f3! ♕d4+ 28 ♔h1 ♔h8 29 ♕f7 ♕xe5? (29...♕h4! 30 ♗e3 ♘g5! is approximately equal) 30 ♖ce1! ♕h5 31 ♗e3 ♕d5 32 ♗h6 ♕h5 33 ♗c1! (with a serious advantage) 33...♘c5?! (the final mistake) 34 ♖xe7 ♖xe7 35 ♕xe7 h6 36 ♗e3! ♕d5 37 ♖f7 ♕xf7 38 ♕xf7 ♘xb3 39 ♗xh6 1-0.

6...0-0 *(D)*

If 6...♘c6 7 ♘ge2 ♖b8!? then after 8 ♕d2 Black has nothing better than 8...0-0, transposing to the main lines. Instead, 8 ♘c1 e5!? 9 d5 ♘d4 10 ♘b3 (of interest is the greedy 10 ♗xd4!? exd4 11 ♕xd4 0-0 12 ♕d2 and then, e.g., 12...♘h5 13 g4!? ♕h4+ 14 ♕f2 ♕xf2+ 15 ♔xf2 ♘f4 16 ♘d3) 10...c5! 11 dxc6 bxc6 12 ♘xd4 exd4 13 ♗xd4 (13 ♕xd4 ♖xb2 14 0-0-0 is also double-edged) 13...♖xb2 14 ♗e2?! (14 ♘b5? ♘xe4!, Platonov-Shamkovich, USSR Ch (Leningrad) 1971; 14 ♕c1!? is better) 14...c5 15 ♗e3 ♘g4 16 ♗d2 ♘e3 17 ♗xe3 ♗xc3+ 18 ♔f2 0-0 19 ♖c1 ♗g7 20 ♖c2 ♖xc2 21 ♕xc2 f5 with better chances for Black, K.Zimmermann-Golubev, Germany simul 1997.

In this position 6...c6 is often answered by the curious-looking 7 c5!?.



7 ♕d2

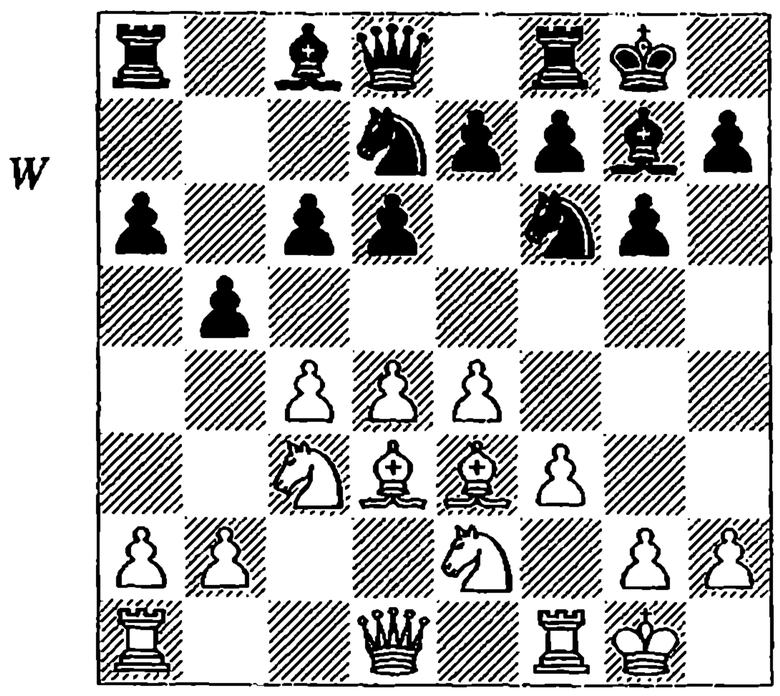
7 ♗d3 is less popular. Then:

a) 7...♘c6 8 ♘ge2 e5 9 d5 ♘e7 followed by ...c6; e.g., 10 g4 c6 11 ♕d2 cxd5 12 cxd5 b5 13 0-0-0 ♗d7 14 ♘g3 b4 15 ♘ce2 ♕a5 16 ♔b1 ♖fc8 17 h4 ♘exd5 18 exd5 ♘xd5 was unclear in Golubev-Ponomariov, Kramatorsk blitz 2000.

b) 7...♘bd7 8 ♘ge2 c5 is possible.

c) 7...c5!? 8 dxc5 dxc5 and now 9 ♗xc5 ♘c6 10 ♘ge2?! ♘d7 11 ♗f2 ♘dc5 12 ♘c1 ♗h6! gave Black excellent compensation in Beliavsky-Kasparov, Moscow Ct (8) 1983, but White has the alternative 9 e5!? ♘fd7 10 f4, when he can possibly hope for some advantage.

d) 7...c6 8 ♘ge2 b5 9 0-0 ♘bd7 *(D)* and then:



d1) 10 cxb5 axb5 11 b4 ♘b6 12 a4 bxa4 13 ♘xa4 is approximately equal, as in Haba-Golubev, Weilburg open 1995 and many earlier games.

d2) 10 ♖c1 e5 11 a3 exd4 12 ♘xd4 ♗b7 13 cxb5 cxb5!, planning ...d5, was OK for Black in Karpov-Kasparov, New York/Lyons Wch (1) 1990.

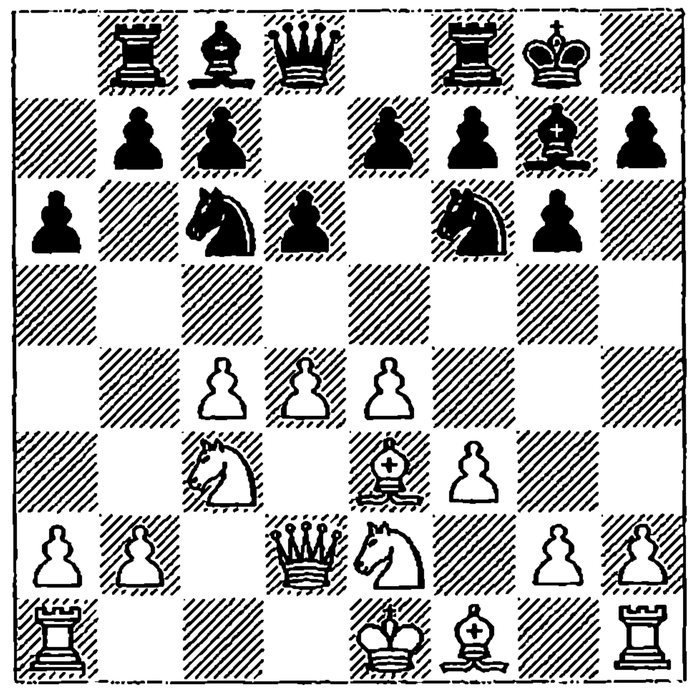
d3) After 10 ♕d2 Black's most popular answer is 10...e5.

d4) 10 b3!? bxc4 (here 10...e5 11 d5! cxd5 12 cxd5 ♘c5 13 ♗c2 b4 14 ♘a4 ♘xa4 15 bxa4 gives White some advantage, Portisch-Spasov, Manila OL 1992) 11 ♗xc4 (11 bxc4!? c5 12 ♖b1 cxd4 13 ♘xd4 was Hort-Kagan, Petropolis IZ 1973 where Black could try 13...e6!? followed by 14...♕c7) 11...a5 12 ♖c1 ♗b7?! (inconsistent; better is 12...♘b6 13 ♗d3 ♗a6!, as in Sammalvuo-Istratescu, Elista OL 1998) 13 ♗d3 ♖c8 and now White can play 14 ♘a4! (preventing ...c5) with pressure. Instead Haba-Golubev, Bundesliga 2001/2 went 14 ♕d2 c5! with reasonable chances for Black, which he spoiled over the next few moves: 15 dxc5 ♘xc5 16 ♗b5 ♕b6 17 ♗c4 ♕b4 (the typical move 17...♗h6! = works here because 18 ♗xh6? ♘xb3+ suddenly loses material for White) 18 ♘f4! ♖fd8 19 ♖fd1 e6?! (19...♖d7!, keeping some coordination between the pieces, occurred to me only during the post-mortem) 20 ♘b5!, etc.

7...♘c6

Black decides to transpose to 5...0-0 6 ♗e3 ♘c6 lines. After 7...c6 White can choose between positional lines and the sharp 8 0-0-0 b5 9 ♗h6.

8 ♘ge2 ♖b8 *(D)*



We have reached the basic position of the ...♘c6 system. White has a strong position in the centre, and must now choose between many possible plans. He can virtually force Black to play 9...e5 by opting for the quite solid 9 ♘c1, he can play for a kingside assault (9 h4, 9 0-0-0 or 9 ♗h6), he can try to seize space on the queenside (9 a3 or 9 ♖b1, preparing b4) and there is also the prophylactic 9 ♖c1 (which prevents 9...b5). We shall deal with the last three options in Game 40 (Savchenko-Golubev) later

in this chapter. For 9 ♗h6 and 9 h4 h5 10 ♗h6, see Game 39, Khomiakov-Golubev.

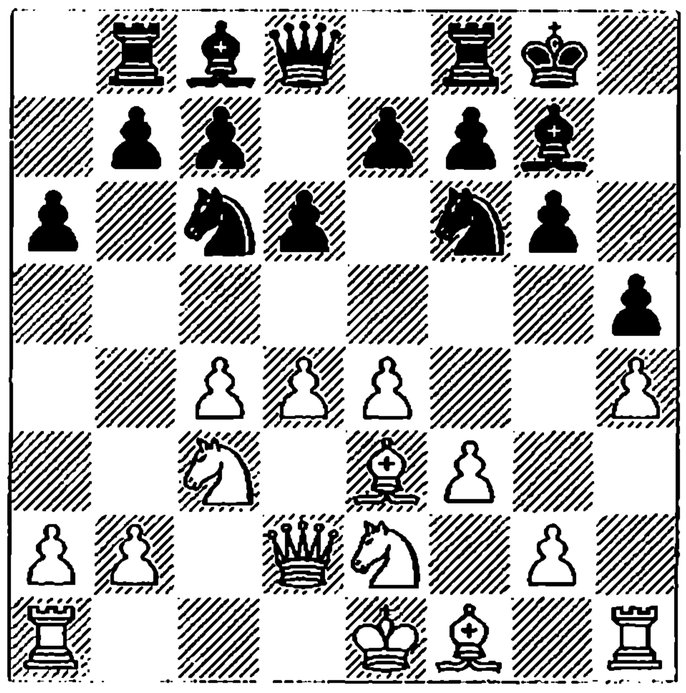
9 ♘c1

Two methods of attacking on the kingside shall be discussed here:

a) 9 0-0-0 b5 10 h4 can transpose to line 'b3' after 10...h5. The alternative for Black is 10...e5 11 d5 ♘a5 12 ♘g3, when 12...♗d7!?, with the remarkable but in fact quite standard idea 13 h5? b4 14 ♘b1 ♗a4! 15 ♖e1 ♗b3!, deserves attention.

b) After 9 h4, 9...b5 10 h5 e5 11 d5 ♘a5 12 ♘g3 bxc4 13 0-0-0 is considered to be somewhat better for White. Most attention is focused on 9...h5 *(D)*, when White has:

W



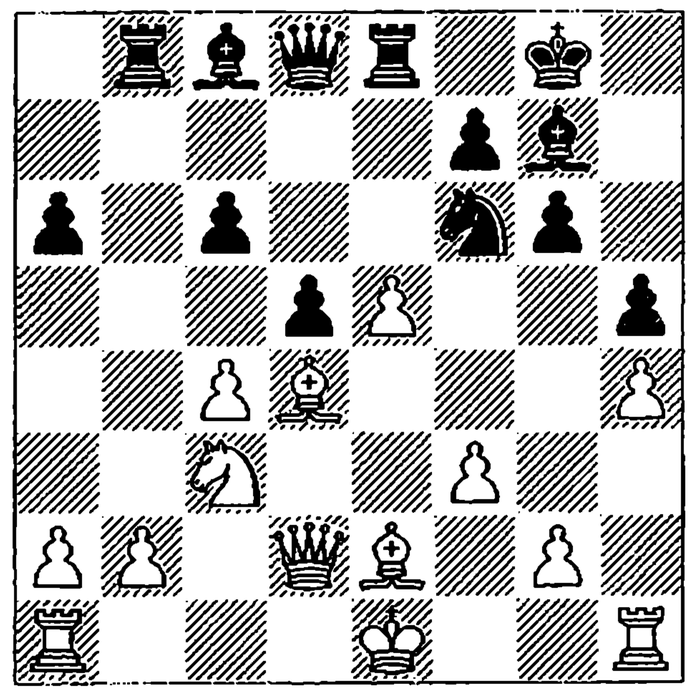
b1) For 10 ♗h6 see Game 39.

b2) 10 ♘d5 ♘h7!? (10...b5 11 cxb5 axb5 12 ♖c1 ♗d7 is not at all clear either) 11 ♗h6 (or 11 g4 hxg4 12 h5 e6! 13 ♘dc3 gxf3 14 hxg6 fxg6 15 ♘f4 {Petursson-Westerinen, Gausdal Z 1985}, when 15...♗xd4 was suggested in *Informator* as Black's best) 11...♗xh6 12 ♕xh6 e6 13 ♘e3 b5 14 0-0-0 bxc4 15 g4 hxg4 16 f4 with a complex position (Piket-Nijboer, Groningen 1992) where, according to Piket, even 16...f5!? deserves to be considered.

b3) 10 0-0-0 is popular, but not particularly dangerous for Black: 10...b5 11 ♗h6 e5! 12 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 13 dxe5 ♘xe5 (another possibility is 13...dxe5) 14 cxb5 axb5 15 ♘f4 b4!? 16 ♘cd5 ♘xd5 17 ♘xd5 c5 18 f4. Now 18...♘g4(!) has led to good results for Black in several correspondence games. The stem game Rivas-Mestel, Marbella Z 1982 continued 18...♘c6 19 f5 ♘e5 20 g4 ♘xg4 21 ♗e2 ♘f2 22 f6+ ♔h7 23 ♗xh5 ♘xh1 24 ♖xh1 and here 24...b3! 25 a3 ♕e8 (Larsen) 26 ♘e7 ♕a4 enables Black to parry the attack, reaching approximate equality after the practically inevitable exchange of queens.

b4) 10 ♘c1!? is the line where, frankly speaking, I see some problems for Black. It was considered that after 10...e5 11 d5 ♘a5 12 ♘b3 Black should go for a pawn sacrifice by 12...c5 (12...♘xb3 13 axb3 c5 14 ♗e2! proved to be strategically unpleasant for Black in a number of grandmaster games) 13 dxc6 bxc6 14 ♘xd4 exd4 15 ♗xd4 ♖e8 16 ♗e2 (16 0-0-0 ♕a5!) 16...d5 and, in comparison with the same position without the inclusion of 9 h4 h5 (which we shall see in our main game), it might seem that Black should have more resources. However, Lautier's recent move 17 e5! *(D)* (instead of 17 cxd5 ♖b4! 18 ♗c5 ♘xe4 19 fxe4 ♗xc3 20 ♕xc3 ♖bxe4 as in Rogozenko-V.Babula, Vejen jr Ech 1993 and other games) may well change this assessment:

B



b41) After 17...♘d7 White plays not 18 f4 ♗h6! or 18 cxd5 ♘xe5, but 18 e6!, exchanging the dark-squared bishops; then 18...fxe6?! 19 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 20 0-0-0 ♕f6 21 g4 hxg4 22 fxg4 was very bad for Black in Lautier-Golubev, ACP Internet blitz 2004, but I do not like the position after the capture by the rook either. White has clear play with the g4 advance, and what does Black have?

b42) 17...c5!? and now:

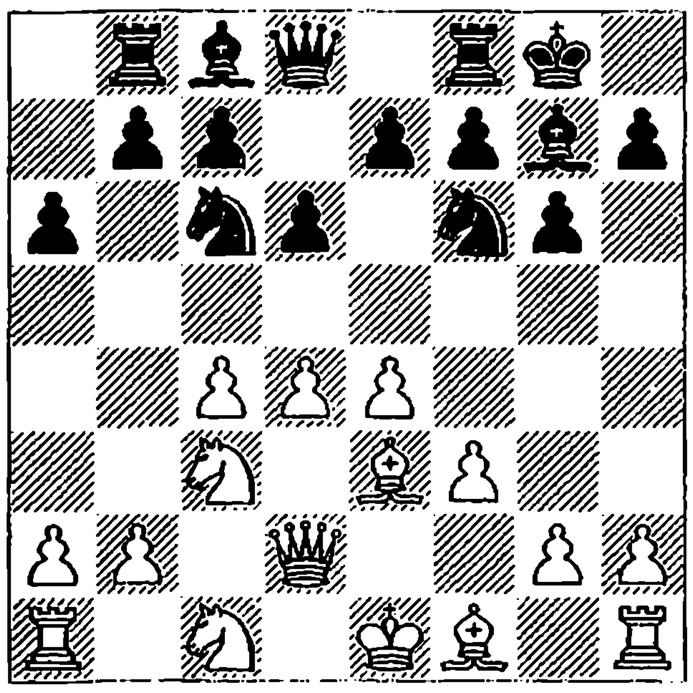
b421) 18 ♗xc5?! ♘d7!? (18...♖xe5!? with the idea 19 ♗d4 ♖e8 20 cxd5 ♖b4) 19 ♗d6 ♘xe5!! 20 ♗xb8 ♘xc4 21 ♕c1 ♗f5 and in this crazy position a draw was agreed in Lautier-Smirin, Rethymnon ECC 2003. It seems that Black has fully sufficient compensation for the rook: 22 ♗f4 ♗d3 (also of interest is 22...♕

23 ♔f1 ♘xb2 24 ♕xb2 ♗xc3 25 ♕c1 d4!) 23 ♔f1 ♗xe2+!? (23...♘xb2 24 ♗d2! d4!?) 24 ♘xe2 ♗xb2 25 ♕d1 (but not 25 ♕e1? d4!) 25...♗e5! 26 ♗g5 (26 ♕c1 ♗b2 = with repetition) 26...f6 27 ♕d3 (Hazai) 27...♔g7! and Black is very much alive after 28 ♖b1 fxg5 29 ♖b7+ ♖e7 (or maybe 29...♔h6!? 30 g4 ♖f8 31 hxg5+ ♔xg5!) 30 ♘d4 ♕d6 31 ♖xe7+ ♕xe7.

b422) The simple 18 exf6! (Hazai) seems to be strong. After 18...cxd4 19 fxg7 dxc3 20 bxc3! ♔xg7 (there is nothing better) 21 cxd5 (21 0-0!? ♕b6+ 22 ♖f2 dxc4 23 ♗xc4 ♗e6) 21...♕b6 (it is hard to be sure that Black can escape with a draw in the line 21...♖b5!? 22 ♕d4+! ♕f6 23 ♕xf6+ ♔xf6 24 ♔f2 ♖b2 25 ♖he1 a5 26 c4 ♗a6 27 ♖ac1 ♖xa2) 22 ♔f1 Black has the initiative, but I do not see how to prove that it compensates for the two sacrificed pawns.

We return to 9 ♘c1 *(D)*.

B



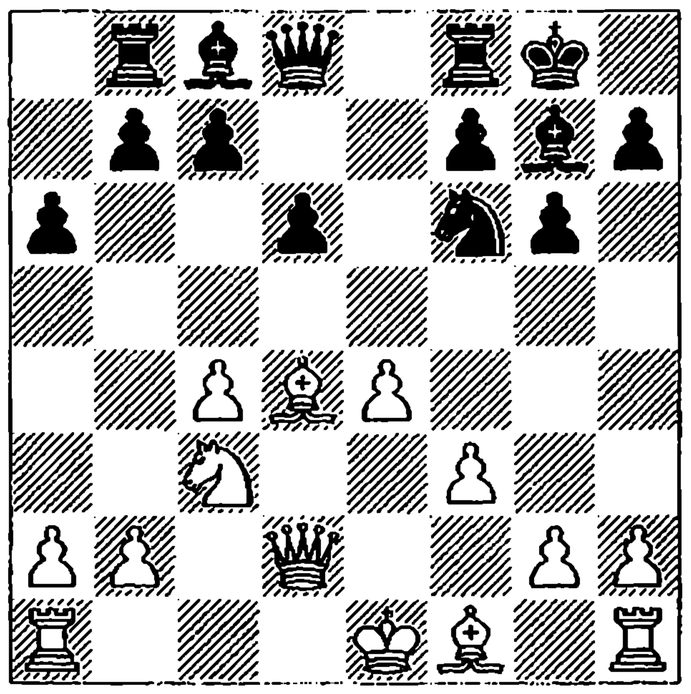
9...e5

Smirin's old idea 9...♘e8 is somewhat dubious; e.g., 10 ♘b3 f5 11 exf5 gxf5 (or 11...♗xf5 12 ♗e2 ♘f6 13 0-0, A.Kuzmin-Badea, Moscow 1990) 12 f4 e5 13 dxe5 dxe5 14 ♕xd8 ♘xd8 15 0-0-0 ♘e6 (15...exf4? fails to 16 ♗a7!) 16 fxe5 ♗xe5 17 ♘d5 and in Kots-Golubev, Mariupol (V.Kuznetsov mem) 1990 I suffered in this endgame quite a lot before achieving a draw against the old Ukrainian master.

10 d5!

10 ♘b3 is less critical: 10...exd4 11 ♘xd4 ♘xd4 (11...♘e5 is also possible; then 12 ♖d1 c6 13 ♗e2 b5 14 cxb5 axb5 15 b4 c5 16 ♘c2 cxb4 17 ♘xb4 ♗e6 18 0-0 ♕a5 19 ♕xd6 ♘c4 20 ♗xc4 bxc4 21 ♘c6! ♕xc3 22 ♗d4 ♘xe4 23 ♗xc3 ♘xd6 24 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 25 ♘xb8 ♘f5 26 ♘d7 results in an endgame with a very minimal advantage for White, Beliavsky-Kasparov, Linares 1990; if he wishes, Black can also try 11...♘h5!? in the spirit of Glek's variation in the Classical system) 12 ♗xd4 *(D)*. Practice has shown that Black is very close to equality:

B

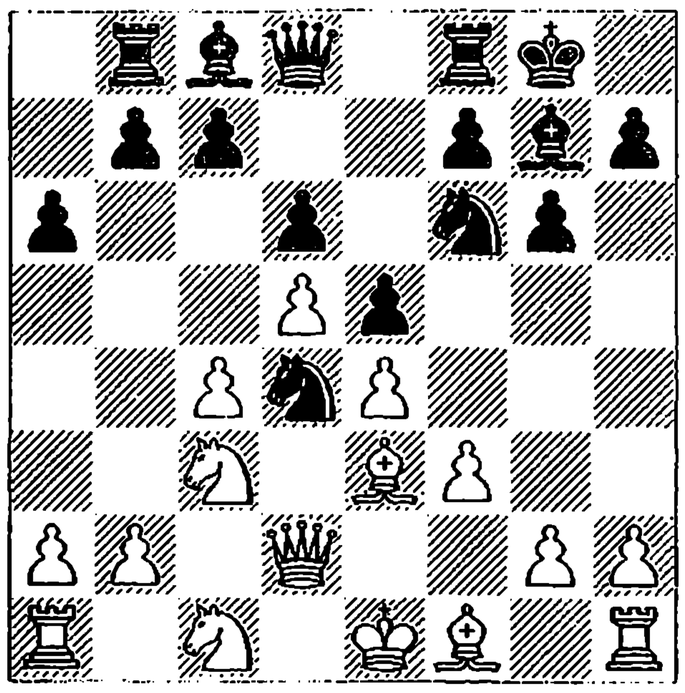


a) 12...♗e6 13 ♗e2 c6 14 a4 ♕a5 (14...d5!? is also fully playable: 15 cxd5 cxd5 16 e5 ♘d7 17 f4 f6, Beliavsky-Nunn, Reykjavik 1988) 15 0-0 ♖fd8 16 ♖ab1?! (16 ♖fd1 is better; then 16...♕b4 17 a5! looked dubious for Black in Muir-Gormally, British Ch (Torquay) 2002, but 16...♘d7!? is stronger) 16...♕b4 17 b3 d5! 18 e5 ♘d7 19 f4 dxc4!? 20 bxc4 ♕a5 21 ♕b2 ♘c5 22 ♖fd1 ♗f8 23 ♖a1 ♘b3! (missed by White) 24 ♕xb3 ♖xd4 25 ♖xd4 ♗c5 26 ♖ad1 ♖d8?! (26...♗xd4+! 27 ♖xd4 ♕c5 28 ♘b5 axb5 29 ♕e3 ♕b4! and Black is better) 27 ♔f1 (27 ♘d5!?) 27...♖xd4 28 ♖xd4 ♗xd4 29 ♘e4 b5 30 ♕a3 c5?! (avoiding a draw) 31 cxb5 axb5 32 ♗xb5 ♗f5 33 ♘f6+ ♔g7 34 ♕c1 ♕b4 35 g4? (in time-trouble, White misses 35 ♘e8+! ♔f8 36 ♘d6, when only he could be better) 35...♕b3 36 ♗e2? ♕h3+ (36...♕b7! wins at once) 37 ♔e1 ♗c3+ 38 ♔d1 ♗e6 39 ♕c2 ♕e3 40 ♘e4 ♕g1+ 0-1 Borovikov-Golubev, Ukrainian jr Ch (Lutsk) 1987.

b) 12...c6 13 ♗e2 (13 a4 ♕a5!? with the idea 14...b5) 13...b5 14 0-0 ♗e6 15 b3!? (15 cxb5 axb5 is approximately equal) 15...bxc4 16 bxc4 ♕a5 17 ♖ac1 c5 (17...♖fd8!?, Hjartarson-Nunn, Rotterdam 1989) 18 ♗e3 ♘d7 19 ♖c2!? (or 19 ♖fd1 ♘e5 20 ♘d5 ♕xd2 21 ♖xd2 ♘c6) 19...♘e5 20 ♘d5 ♕xd2 21 ♖xd2 ♘c6 22 f4 ♗d4 23 ♔f2 ♗xe3+ 24 ♘xe3 ♘d4 25 g4 ♔g7 26 f5 ♗d7 27 ♘d5 f6!. Black has fulfilled his strategic tasks and later won in Raksin-Golubev, Volgograd tt 1987.

10...♘d4 *(D)*

W



Black is intending to support his d4-knight by 11...c5, so now White should attack this knight either by 11 ♘1e2 or by 11 ♘b3. In both cases one of Black's options is the pawn sacrifice by 11...c5 12 dxc6 bxc6 (as played in the featured game). The correctness of this idea remains a matter of discussion, so I shall mention Black's alternative approaches as well.

11 ♘b3

11 ♘1e2 c5 (11...♘xe2 12 ♗xe2 ♘h5! 13 0-0-0 f5 is an important alternative – lately Black has had decent results in this line) 12 dxc6 ♘xc6 (12...bxc6 13 ♘xd4 transposes to the main game) 13 ♖d1 ♗e6 14 ♘c1 (14 ♘d5 allows the immediate 14...b5!; 14 b3!? b5!? 15 cxb5 axb5 16 ♕xd6 ♕xd6 17 ♖xd6 ♘b4!? {Fabri-G.Perez, corr. 1999} and Black probably has compensation; e.g., 18 ♗c5 ♘c2+ 19 ♔d1 ♖fc8) and here 14...♕c8!? is possibly of interest (instead of 14...♘d4 15 ♘b3! with a stable advantage for White); e.g., 15 ♘b3 b5 16 cxb5 axb5 17 ♘xb5 d5 with compensation for the pawn, as in the old game Zamikhovsky-Tukmakov, Ukrainian Ch (Kiev) 1963.

11...c5

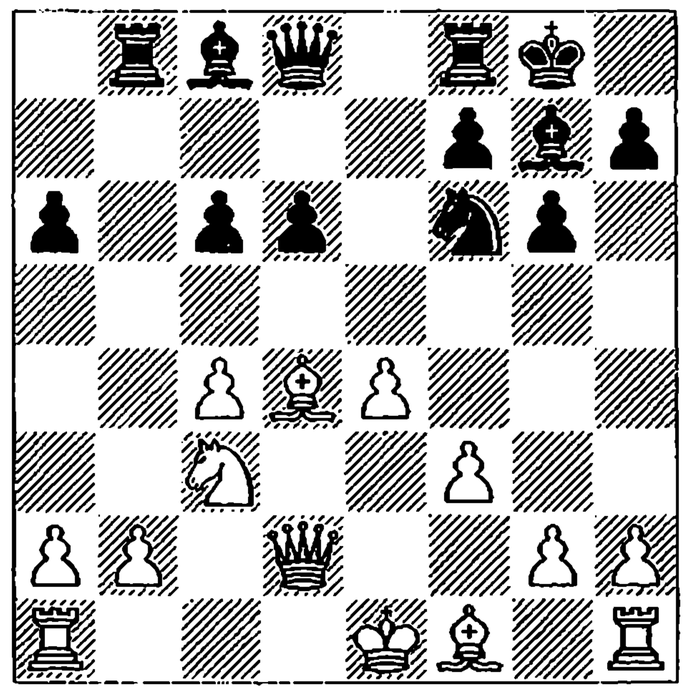
Here the alternative is 11...♘xb3 12 axb3 c5 (preventing 13 b4) 13 g4! (preventing ...♘h5, which White failed to do in Trajanovski-Golubev, Skopje open 1991: 13 ♗d3 ♘h5 14 ♘e2 f5 15 ♗g5 ♗f6 16 ♗xf6 ♕xf6 17 0-0 f4 18 g4 fxg3 19 hxg3 b6 20 ♖f2 a5 21 ♔g2 ♖b7 22 ♕h6 ♖bf7 23 ♖af1 ♕e7 24 ♘c3? ♕d7! 25 ♖h1 ♘xg3! 26 ♔xg3 ♖xf3+ 27 ♖xf3 ♕g4+ 28 ♔f2 ♖xf3+ 29 ♔e1 ♕g3+ 30 ♔d2 ♖xd3+ 31 ♔c2 ♗h3 0-1; White achieves nothing special by 13 b4 cxb4 14 ♘a4 b5 15 cxb5 axb5 16 ♕xb4 ♘e8!? 17 ♘b6 ♗h6! 18 ♗f2 ♖xb6 19 ♕a5 ♖a6! 20 ♕xd8 ♖xa1+ 21 ♔e2 ♖b1!, when Black is not risking anything, Ibragimov-Delchev, Linares open 2001) 13...h5!? (13...♘e8 is a bit too passive to my mind) 14 h3 ♘h7 15 gxh5 (15 0-0-0 h4!) 15...♕h4+ 16 ♕f2 ♕xh5 (the endgame after 16...♕xf2+ 17 ♔xf2 gxh5 is somewhat better for White; 16...♘g5? loses to 17 ♕xh4 ♘xf3+ 18 ♔e2 ♘xh4 19 ♗g5, when the h4-knight is trapped) 17 ♗e2 f5 (17...♗f6? 18 h4!, Titenko-Zakharov, USSR 1966) 18 f4 (after 18 exf5!?, Hazai, Black can try 18...♗xf5!? 19 0-0-0 ♘f6 20 f4 ♕h7 21 fxe5 ♘e4) 18...♕h6 and Black seems to have enough resources in a complicated battle: 19 exf5 (19 h4 exf4 20 ♕xf4 g5 21 ♕f1 {Utnasunov-Vik.Kuznetsov, Vladimir 2002} 21...♗e5!?) 19...exf4 (19...♖xf5!?, A.Braun-Schunk, German Ch (Altenkirchen) 2005; 19...♗xf5!? 20 fxe5 g5!) 20 ♕xf4 g5 21 ♕g3 ♗xf5 (21...♗e5!?) 22 h4 ♖be8!, Roussel-Roozmon – Lahno, Montreal 2004.

12 dxc6 bxc6

12...♘xb3 allows the *zwischenzug* 13 c7!, when White has a stable plus after 13...♕xc7 14 axb3.

13 ♘xd4 exd4 14 ♗xd4 *(D)*

B



Black is ahead in development and his hopes for compensation are linked with ...d5. Practice has shown that slower plans (e.g., with ...c5) fail.

14...♖e8

Now I think that the immediate 14...d5 may be preferable. This can often lead to the same positions, but allows Black to avoid some dangerous lines. 15 cxd5 (15 e5 ♘d7 is likely to transpose) 15...cxd5 16 e5 (16 exd5 gives Black chances: there is not only 16...♖e8+ 17 ♗e2 ♖b4 but also the immediate 16...♖b4!?) 16...♘d7! (after 16...♖e8, 17 ♗e2 transposes to the main game, and there is also the untested 17 f4!?) 17 f4 f6 and now White's main choice is between

18 cxf6 ♖e8+ 19 ♗e2 (see note 'a' to White's 19th move) and 18 e6 ♖e8 19 ♗e2, transposing to line 'b' of that same note.

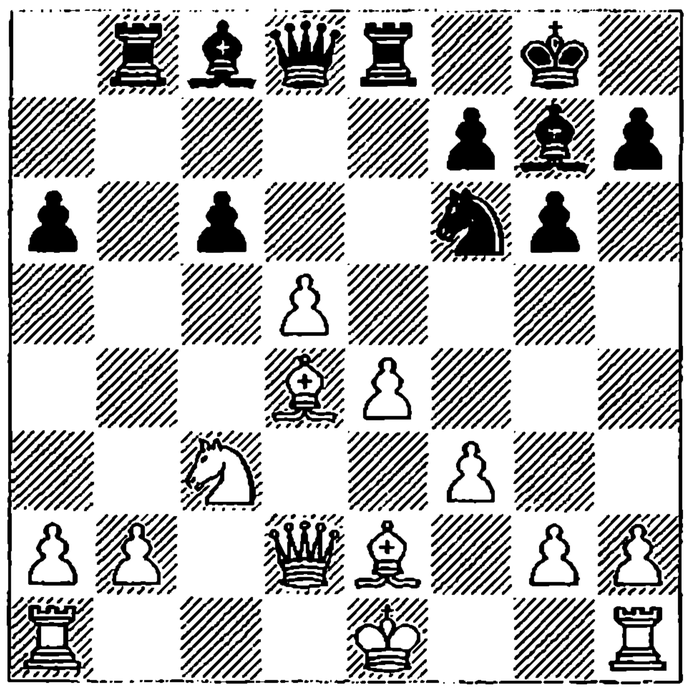
15 ♗e2

15 ♔f2? was once seen in practice, but then Black has 15...♖xb2! 16 ♕xb2 ♘g4+ 17 fxg4 ♗xd4+ 18 ♔e1 ♖xe4+ 19 ♔d2 ♕g5+ 20 ♔c2 ♖e3 21 ♗d3 ♕xg4 with at least sufficient compensation for the rook.

15...d5 16 cxd5! *(D)*

Weaker is 16 e5 ♘d7 17 f4 ♗h6! 18 ♕e3?! c5!.

B



16...cxd5

The bizarre 16...♖b4 cannot solve Black's problems:

a) 17 e5 ♘xd5 18 ♘xd5 ♖xd4 19 ♕xd4 ♖xe5 (19...♗xe5!? 20 ♕b6 ♕xd5 21 ♖d1 ♕e6 22 0-0 ♗f4 23 ♕b4! ♕f6 24 g3!? ♖xe2 25 ♕xf4 ♕xb2 26 ♕h6!? ♕b6+ 27 ♔h1 can be evaluated as slightly better for White) 20 ♕b6 ♕xd5 21 ♖d1 ♕e6 22 ♖d8+ ♗f8 23 0-0 ♔g7 (23...♖xe2? 24 ♕c5! ♕e3+ 25 ♕xe3 ♖xe3 26 ♖xc8 ♖e6 27 ♖c1 1-0 Sammalvuo-Johansson, Turku 1997) 24 ♖xf8 ♔xf8 25 ♗xa6 ♗xa6 26 ♕xa6 ♖e2 (Van der Tak) and all Black's dreams are about the draw.

b) 17 ♗c5 ♘xe4! 18 fxe4 ♗xc3 19 ♕xc3 ♖bxe4 20 0-0 ♖xe2 21 dxc6 ♕d5 (21...♕g5?! is convincingly refuted by 22 ♖f2! ♗h3 23 ♗f8!! ♖2e5 24 ♗d6 +– Michenka-Hagara, Trinec 1998) 22 ♗f2 ♖8e3 23 ♕xe3! ♖xe3 24 ♗xe3 ♕xc6 25 ♖ac1 ♕b7 26 ♖fd1 ♗e6 (Van der Tak) also seems unpleasant for Black.

17 e5!

17 exd5 ♖b4! 18 0-0 (18 ♗c5?! ♖xb2! 19 ♕xb2 ♘xd5) 18...♘e4! (in practice Black has tried only 18...♖xd4?! 19 ♕xd4 followed by 19...♘g4 or 19...♘e4) 19 fxe4 ♗xd4+ 20 ♔h1 ♗e5 and, although Black is two pawns down, he can hardly be worse.

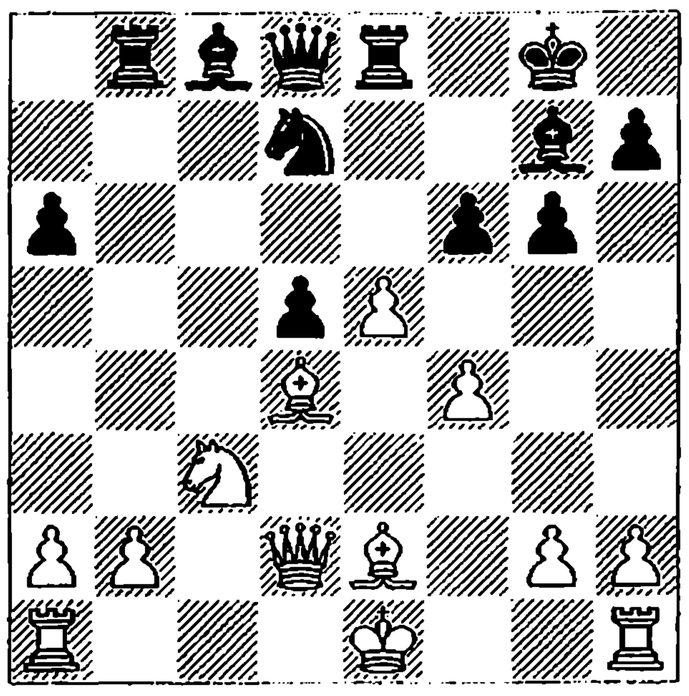
17...♘d7 18 f4

I am afraid that 18 0-0 ♘xe5 19 ♖ad1 is also slightly better for White. Atalik employs the same idea, but with the f-pawns off the board.

18...f6 *(D)*

18...♗h6 can be strongly met by 19 ♕e3! with a clear advantage for White: 19...♘xe5?! 20 ♗xe5 f6 21 ♗xf6 ♖xe3 22 ♗xd8 ♖xb2 23 ♗f6!? (or 23 0-0-0!?, but not 23 ♔f2?! d4) 23...♗g4 24 h3! with the idea 24...♗xe2 25 ♘xd5.

W



19 0-0!?

This move was a novelty and is not bad at all – it ensures a relatively calm position with a slight advantage for White, who will play against Black's isolated d-pawn.

The two following alternatives are especially important, as we saw in the note to Black's 14th move:

a) 19 exf6 ♘xf6 (it is hard to trust 19...♗xf6) 20 ♗e5! ♖b4 21 a3 (21 0-0-0!? is an interesting possibility, when Black may seek chances with 21...♗e6!?; instead, 21...♗f5 fails to 22 a3 ♕a5 23 g4!) 21...♖b3 22 0-0 ♕b6+ 23 ♔h1 ♖xb2 with an acceptable, even if slightly worse, position for Black, Groszpeter-Mestel, Lucerne OL 1982.

b) 19 e6!? ♘f8! 20 f5! gxf5 leads to a complicated position, which has occurred several times in practice. Black's pawn-structure is destroyed but he will have an extra pawn and I believe that his resources may well be sufficient for equality.

19...fxe5 20 fxe5 ♘xe5 21 ♖ad1!

Now it is not easy to find a suitable move for Black.

21...♕d6!?

Almost anything else is bad. 21...♘c4?? loses to 22 ♗xc4 dxc4 23 ♕f4!. 21...♖b4? is refuted by 22 ♗c5. 21...a5?! is unpleasantly met by 22 ♗b5!. After 21...♗f5?! White grabs the pawn: 22 ♗xa6 ♘d3 23 ♗xd3! (but not 23 ♗xg7? ♖xb2! 24 ♕h6 ♕b6+ 25 ♔h1 ♘f2+ 26 ♖xf2 ♕xf2 27 ♗f1 ♖e1 and Black wins) 23...♗xd4+ 24 ♔h1 with a clear advantage.

21...♗b7!?, as played in Suto-Deak, Hungarian Cht 2002/3, is virtually the only alternative, but I intended to develop the bishop to f5.

22 ♔h1

After 22 a3, 22...♘c4!? 23 ♗xc4 dxc4 is possible.

22...♗f5

22...♘c4 is risky: 23 ♗xc4 dxc4 24 ♕f2! ♖f8 25 ♕e3! ♖xf1+ 26 ♖xf1 ♗f5 (26...♗xd4? loses by force: 27 ♕e8+ ♔g7 28 ♘e4! ♕b4 29 ♕f7+ ♔h8 30 ♘f6 ♗xf6 31 ♕xf6+ ♔g8 32 ♕f7+ ♔h8 33 ♕e8+ ♔g7 34 ♖f7+ ♔h6 35 ♕e3+ g5 36 ♖f6+ ♔g7 37 ♕xg5+ ♔h8 38 ♕e5! ♔g8 39 ♕e8+ ♔g7 40 ♖f7+ ♔h6 41 ♕c6+ and White mates) 27 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 28 ♖d1 with a dangerous initiative for White.

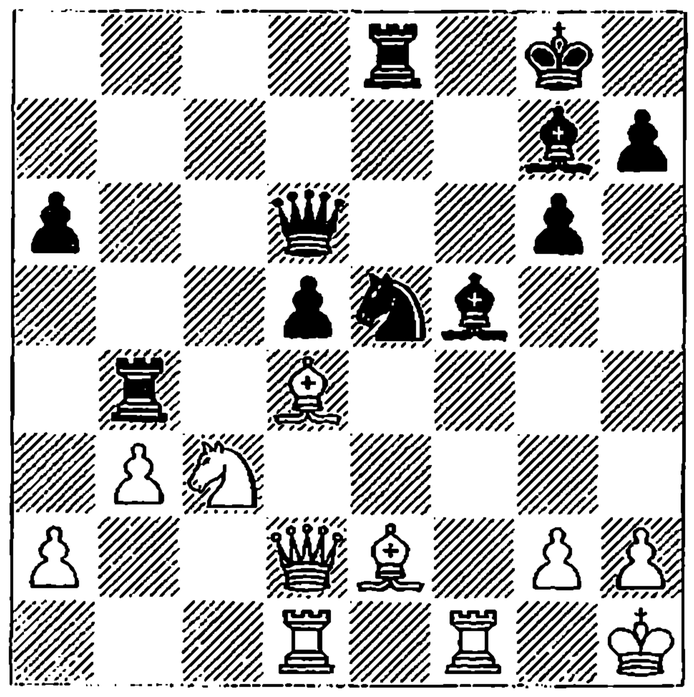
23 b3

After 23 ♗g1 Black has the good answer 23...♘f7!, but 23 ♗f2!? deserved attention, because then 23...♘f7?! is parried by 24 ♗g3.

23...♖b4 *(D)*

Trying to develop maximum activity. Objectively, something less aggressive such as 23...♖bc8 should have been preferred.

W



24 ♕e3

White had a wide choice here:

a) 24 ♗f2!? d4 25 ♗xd4 (25 ♘d5 ♕xd5! 26 ♕xb4 ♗e4 27 ♖g1 d3 gives Black compensation) 25...♖xd4!? (not 25...♘g4 26 ♗xg4! ♖xd4 27 ♕f2! and the white bishop is untouchable; 25...♘f3 26 ♗xf3 ♖xd4 27 ♕f2 26 ♕xd4 ♕xd4 27 ♖xd4 ♘f7 28 ♖fd1 and Black is more or less alive.

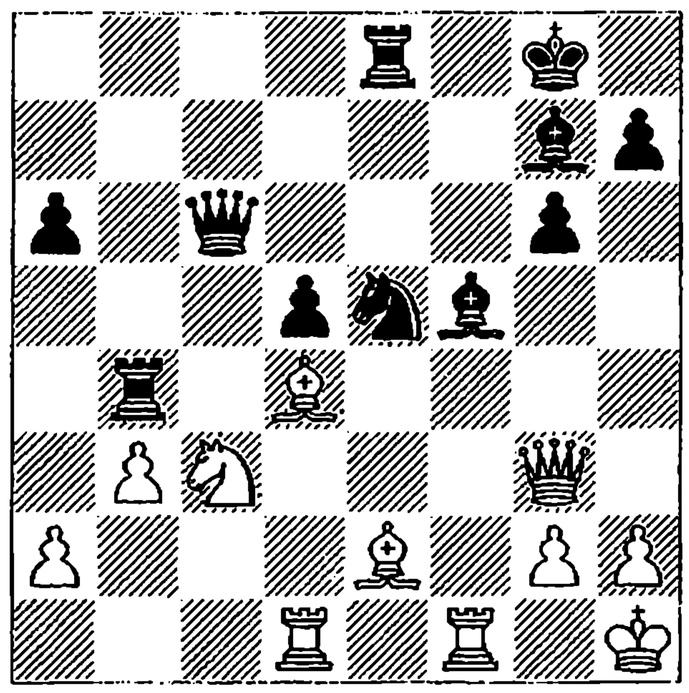
b) 24 ♘xd5!? ♘f3 (24...♘g4 25 ♗g1 is brilliantly refuted by 26 ♕xd4!! ♗xd4 27 ♗c4) 25 ♗xf3 ♖xd4 with an extra pawn for White, but it is not easy to convert because of Black's bishop-pair.

c) 24 ♗xe5 ♕xe5!? 25 ♕xd5+ ♔h8 26 ♕xe5 ♗xe5 27 ♘d5 ♖h4 28 h3 a5 is a similar story to line 'b'.

d) 24 ♗g1! d4 25 ♘d5 is probably the most critical. After 25...♕xd5 26 ♕xb4 it is hard for Black to prove that he has enough compensation for the exchange: 26...♗e4 27 ♖f2 d3 28 ♗f1.

24...♕c6! 25 ♕g3! *(D)*

B



25...♖xd4

The tempting 25...♗c2 26 ♖d2 ♗h6 can be met by 27 a3!? ♗xd2 28 axb4, when even after 28...♗xc3! 29 ♗xc3 ♗d3 (Black's best option) White retains some advantage by 30 ♗xc5!? ♗xe2 31 ♖e1. 25...♖bb8?! is answered by 26 ♘xd5! ♕xd5 27 ♖xf5! ♕e4 (27...gxf5? 28 ♗e1) 28 ♖f2! ♖bd8 29 ♕f4!, when White consolidates, preserving an extra pawn.

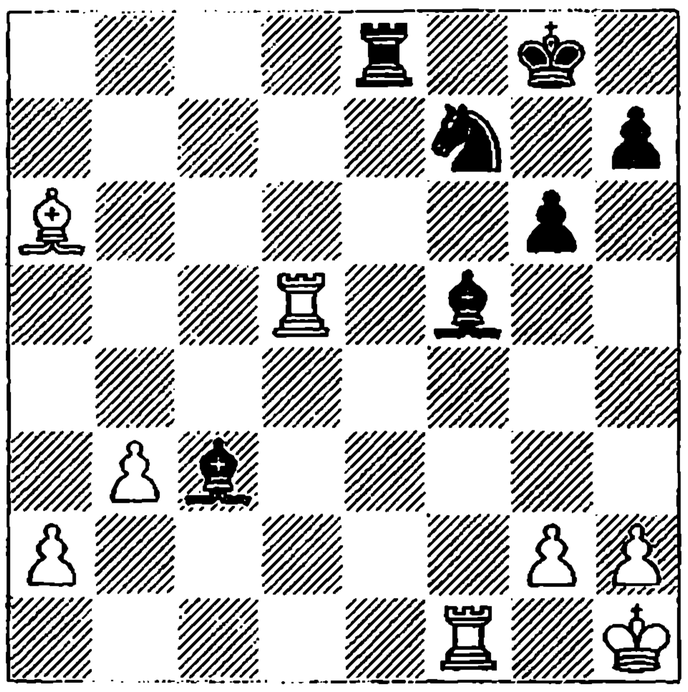
26 ♖xd4 ♘f7

26...♘d7? loses to 27 ♗f3, which is why Black puts his knight on the a2-g8 diagonal. However, 26...♘g4!? is also possible: 27 ♖xg4 (27 ♗f3? ♘e3!) 27...♗xg4 with very realistic chances for a draw after, e.g., 28 ♕xg4 ♗xc3 29 ♕f3 ♖c8 30 ♕f7+ ♔h8 31 ♗f3 ♖d8 32 ♖d1 ♕e8.

27 ♖xd5! ♕xc3 28 ♕xc3 ♗xc3 29 ♗xa6 (D)

The endgame is obviously unpleasant for Black: White's connected passed pawns are potentially very dangerous.

B



29...♖a8!?

Black attempts to find a concrete solution – and, with a little help from his opponent, it works. 29...♘e5! was objectively a stronger move.

30 ♗c4?!

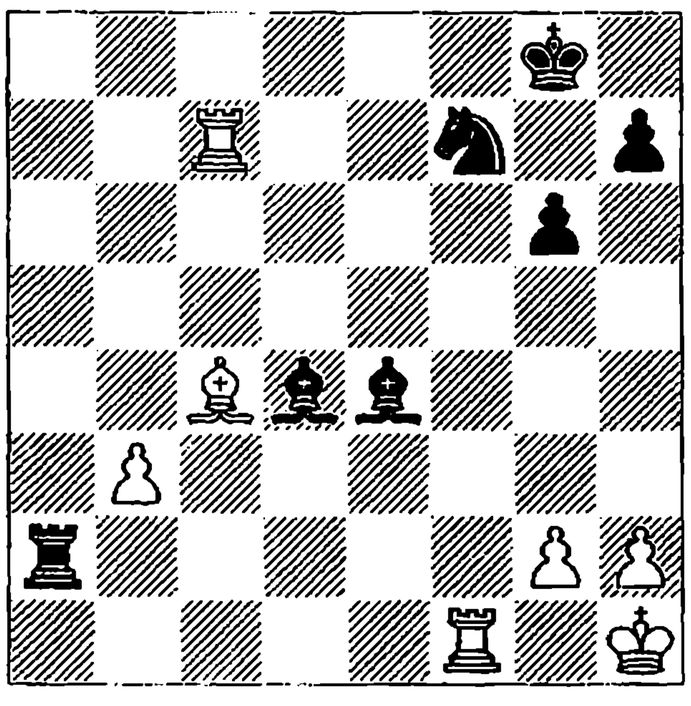
This tempting move allows Black to equalize by force. 30 ♗d3! would have preserved the advantage: 30...♗e6 31 ♖c5 ♗d4 and now 32 ♖c2 or 32 ♖c6!? ♗d5 33 ♖a6.

30...♖xa2! 31 ♖c5

31 ♖d8+?! gets White nowhere: 31...♔g7 32 ♗xf7 ♔xf7 33 g4? ♔e7.

31...♗d4! 32 ♖c7 ♗e4! *(D)*

W



33 ♗xf7+

Or 33 ♖c8+ ♔g7 34 ♖xf7+ ♔h6 35 ♗f1 ♖a1! (threatening 36...♗f5) 36 ♖cf8 ♗c5! and Black equalizes easily.

33...♔h8 34 ♗d5!

White must return the piece: there is no other defence against checkmate.

34...♗xd5 35 ♖f8+ ♗g8 36 g3

Not 36 g4? ♖xh2+! 37 ♔xh2 ♗e5+.

36...♖a7!

36...♖f2? loses to 37 ♖e8.

37 ♖xa7

37 ♖cc8 ♖g7 is somewhat risky for White: Black will inevitably free himself – e.g., 38 g4 g5!? followed by ...h6 and ...♔h7.

37...♗xa7 38 b4 ♔g7 39 ♖d8

The endgame is drawish. The following inaccuracies in mutual time-trouble do not change much.

39...♗b6?!

After 39...♗e6! Black has not even a shadow of a problem.

40 ♖d7+?!

40 ♖d6! ♗e3 41 ♔g2 ♗c4 leaves White slightly better, but a win looks improbable.

40...♔f8 41 h4 ♔e8 42 ♖g7 ♔f8 ½-½

Game 39

Khomiakov – Golubev

Ostrava open 1992

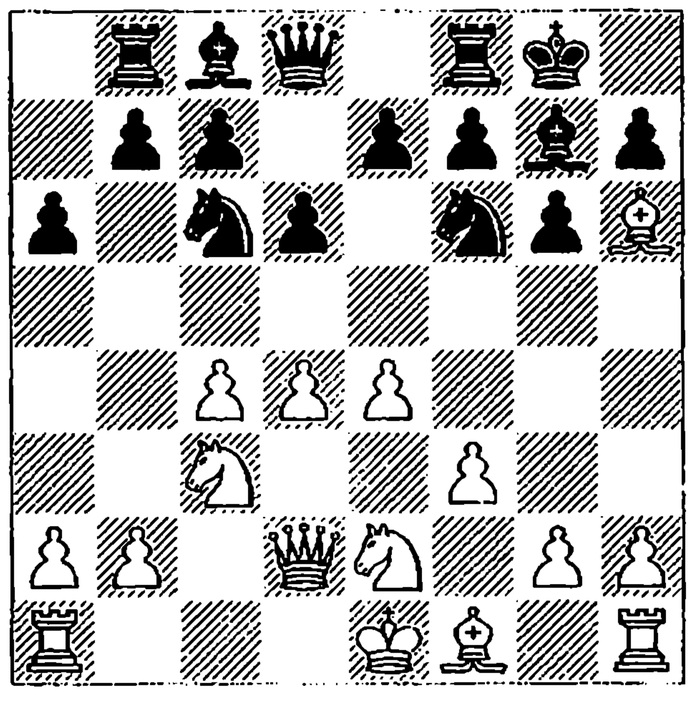
1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 5 f3 0-0 6 ♗g5

The specific nuances of this move will be covered in Game 43 (Dreev-Golubev). In the present game it merely transposes to the line 6 ♗e3 ♘c6 7 ♕d2 a6 8 ♘ge2 ♖b8 9 h4 h5 10 ♗h6.

6...♘c6 7 ♘ge2 a6 8 ♕d2 ♖b8 9 h4

The immediate 9 ♗h6 *(D)* (transposing to 6 ♗e3 ♘c6 7 ♕d2 a6 8 ♘ge2 ♖b8 9 ♗h6) can lead to the following lines:

B



a) 9...b5 10 h4 and here:

a1) One of the most famous King's Indian games, Bagirov-Gufeld, Kirovabad 1973, continued 10...e5 11 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 12 h5! ♔h8!? (objectively, the less sophisticated 12...bxc4! can be preferred) 13 ♘d5 bxc4 14 hxg6 fxg6 15 ♕h6 ♘h5 16 g4 (16 0-0-0! ♖f7 17 g4 ♘f6 18

♕xg6 ♕g8 19 ♕h6 is better for White according to Shipov's analysis at the *Worldchessrating* website) 16...♖xb2! 17 gxh5 g5 18 ♖g1 g4! 19 0-0-0 (possibly not best) 19...♖xa2 20 ♘ef4!? exf4 and in this complex position White went astray with 21 ♘xf4?, which was very nicely punished by 21...♖xf4! 22 ♕xf4 c3! 23 ♗c4 ♖a3! 24 fxg4 ♘b4 25 ♔b1 ♗e6! 26 ♗xe6 ♘d3! 27 ♕f7 ♕b8+ 28 ♗b3 ♖xb3+ 29 ♔c2 ♘b4+! 30 ♔xb3 ♘d5+ 31 ♔c2 ♕b2+ 32 ♔d3 ♕b5+ 0-1.

a2) 10...♗xh6 11 ♕xh6 e5 (this is better than 11...♘b4?! 12 0-0-0 bxc4 13 ♘f4 c5 and instead of 14 dxc5? ♘xa2+!! 15 ♘xa2 ♕a5, as in Sjödahl-V.Babula, Bundesliga 1998/9, both 14 h5 and 14 e5 look promising for White) 12 0-0-0 transposes to line 'b2'.

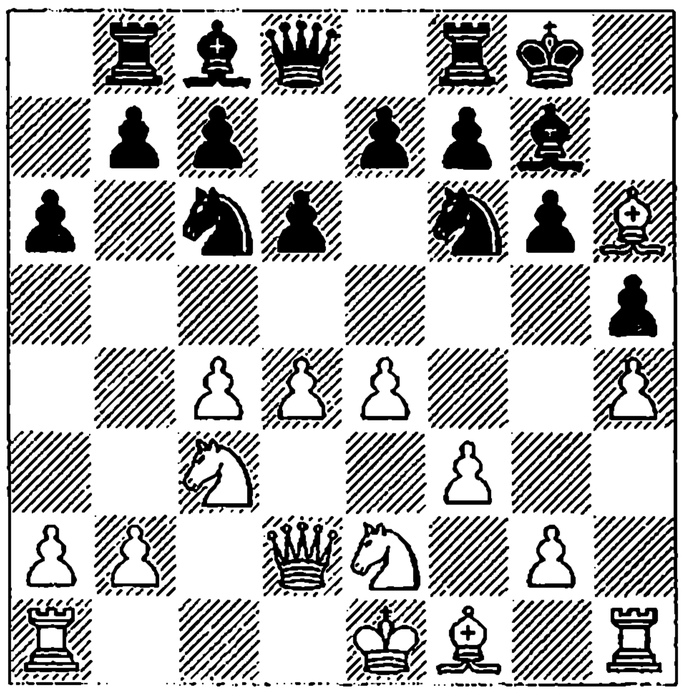
b) 9...♗xh6 10 ♕xh6 e5 11 0-0-0 b5 and now:

b1) 12 c5?! exd4 (12...b4!?) 13 ♘xd4 ♘xd4 14 ♖xd4 ♕e7 (14...b4 15 ♘d5 dxc5 allows a knight sacrifice: 16 e5 ♘xd5 17 ♖h4 ♖e8 18 ♗c4 with an attack) 15 cxd6 cxd6 16 a3 ♕e5!? 17 ♕d2 ♗e6 18 f4 ♕c5 19 f5 ♗b3 20 ♔b1? (20 ♖b4! with chances for both sides) 20...a5! 21 ♖xd6 b4! was much better for Black in Michenka-Golubev, Karvina 1992/3.

b2) 12 h4 is normal. Possibly 12...bxc4 (rather than 12...exd4 13 ♘xd4 ♘xd4 14 ♖xd4 ♕e7 15 h5!) 13 h5 ♕e7 14 g4 exd4 15 ♘xd4 ♘xd4 16 ♖xd4 ♗e6, as in Yaplian-A.Kuzmin, USSR 1982, is advisable for Black.

9...h5 10 ♗h6 *(D)*

B



10...e5

After 10...♗xh6 11 ♕xh6 e5, 12 d5 leads to the game, while White has the alternative 12 0-0-0!?. Most often Black answers with 10...b5. After 11 0-0-0 (or 11 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 12 0-0-0 e5) 11...e5 the play transposes to note 'b3' to White's 9th move in Game 38.

11 d5

Only a few days after the Ostrava game was played, the same position was tested in the game Spassky-Fischer, Sveti Stefan/Belgrade (8) 1992: 11 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 12 d5 ♘e7 (an important alternative is 12...♘a5!? followed by ...c5) 13 ♘g3 c6 14 dxc6 ♘xc6 15 0-0-0 ♗e6 16 ♔b1 ♘e8 with slightly better chances for White.

The retreat 11 ♗g5 gives White little after, e.g., 11...exd4 12 ♘xd4 ♕e8!. 11 0-0-0 b5!? could still transpose to well-known lines.

11...♗xh6

Taking into account my assessment of the position which now arises almost by force after Black's 16th move, 11...♘a5!? 12 ♘c1 c5 can be noted as an alternative here.

12 ♕xh6 ♘d4 13 0-0-0 c5

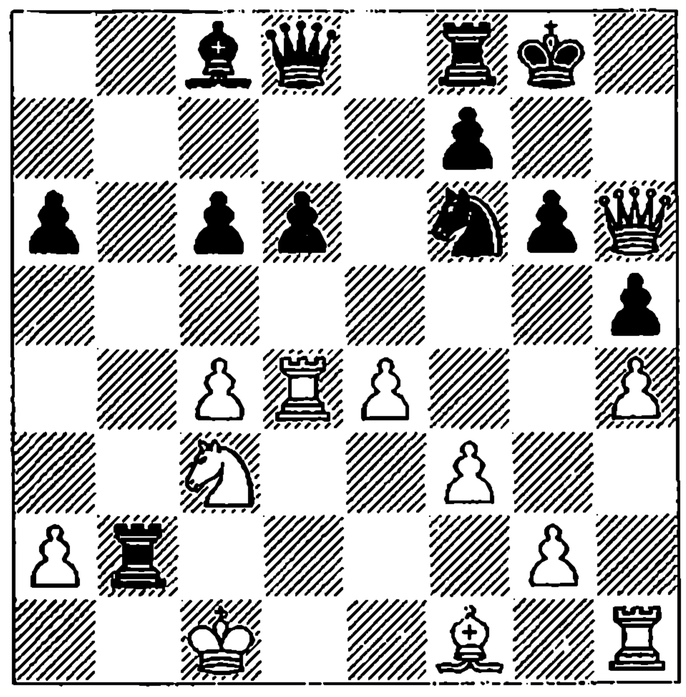
13...♘xe2+ 14 ♗xe2 followed by g4 clearly favours White.

14 dxc6 bxc6

Both 14...♘xc6 15 c5! and 14...♘xe2+ 15 ♗xe2 bxc6 16 ♕d2! seem unpleasant for Black.

15 ♘xd4 exd4 16 ♖xd4 ♖xb2 *(D)*

W



Obviously, after other moves Black would not have any compensation for the pawn. But 16...♖xb2 looks impressive enough and for a long time I honestly thought that Black had no problems in this line. Serious analysis, however, shows a different picture.

17 ♔xb2?

After 17 e5!? ♗f5! (a dubious alternative is 17...♘e8 18 c5 ♖b8 19 cxd6 ♕a5) 18 ♗d3! (not 18 exf6? ♕xf6 19 ♕e3 ♖fb8 20 ♔d1 ♖c2! 21 g4 hxg4 22 fxg4 ♖xc3! 23 ♕xc3 ♗e4 and Black is on top) 18...♖xg2! (18...♕a5? fails to 19 ♔xb2 dxe5 20 ♖e4) 19 ♗xf5! (19 exf6?

♕xf6 20 ♕f4 c5 again favours Black) 19...♕a5! 20 ♕e3! an intricate position arises in which Black has some problems. However, it seems that he can escape with a draw after 20...♖e8!? 21 ♖d2 ♕a3+ 22 ♔d1!? (22 ♔c2 ♖xe5 23 ♗e4 is answered by 23...♖g3! with counterchances) 22...♖xe5 23 ♗e4 ♖xd2+ 24 ♕xd2 ♘xe4 25 fxe4 ♖xe4!? (an interesting resource) 26 ♘xe4 (or 26 ♖e1 ♖xe1+ 27 ♔xe1 ♕c5! 28 ♕f4 d5) 26...♕f3+ 27 ♕e2 ♕xh1+ 28 ♔c2 ♕xh4 29 ♘xd6 ♕f6 30 ♕e8+ (or 30 c5 h4!) 30...♔g7 31 ♕xc6 ♕f2+, etc.

Unfortunately, 17 c5! is even stronger, and I have not found a satisfactory solution for Black. For example, 17...♖b8 (hardly better is 17...♖b7 18 ♖xd6! and then, e.g., 18...♕a5 19 ♔c2 ♘d5 20 exd5! ♗f5+ 21 ♗d3 ♕xc5 22 ♗xf5 ♕xd6 23 dxc6 ♕xc6? 24 ♗e4; 17...♖f2? leads Black to a lost endgame after 18 ♕e3 ♕a5 19 ♖a4! ♕xc5 20 ♕xc5 dxc5 21 ♘d1! ♖xf1 22 ♖xf1) 18 ♖xd6! ♕a5 19 ♔c2! ♗e6 (19...♕a3 is parried by 20 ♕c1! and White should win; almost hopeless for Black is 19...♘d5 20 ♖xg6+! fxg6 21 ♕xg6+ ♔h8 22 ♕xh5+ and then, say, 22...♔g8 23 exd5 ♗f5+ 24 ♗d3 ♗xd3+ 25 ♔xd3) 20 ♖xe6 ♕a3!? (after 20...fxe6 21 ♗c4 the main line is 21...♔f7 22 e5 ♕b4 23 exf6 ♕b2+ 24 ♔d3 ♖bd8+ 25 ♗d5!, winning for White) 21 ♖d6! ♖b2+ 22 ♔d3 ♕xc5 23 ♖d4!? and, although the white king does not feel secure in the centre, it is unlikely that Black can prove compensation for the bishop.

17...♕b6+

Now Black is certainly OK.

18 ♘b5

18 ♔c2 ♕xd4 19 ♕d2 is safer, when Black is no more than slightly better.

18...axb5!

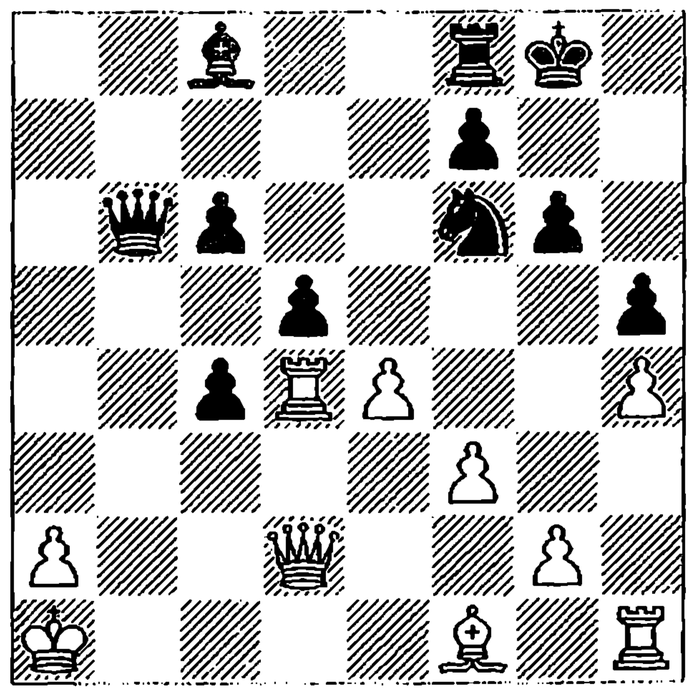
It is important for Black to open the a-file. The capture with the c-pawn would be much weaker.

19 ♕d2

After 19 c5 either capture on c5 gives Black very good chances. White cannot solve his problems by 19 ♖xd6 bxc4+ 20 ♔a1 (20 ♔c2 ♗e6!? with the idea 21 ♖xe6 ♖b8! 22 ♕c1 fxe6 23 ♗xc4 ♕f2+ 24 ♔c3 ♕xg2) 20...♕b4! 21 ♖d2 c3! (after 21...♕c3+ 22 ♖b2 Black has no more than perpetual check) 22 ♖c2 ♗e6 23 ♕c1 ♖a8, when Black's attack is dangerous.

19...bxc4+ 20 ♔a1 d5! *(D)*

W



Black has built up a strong construction in the centre – his chances are better.

21 ♕c3

21 g4? is refuted by 21...c5!.

21...♗e6 22 ♖d2 ♘d7 23 ♗e2

Here 23 g4 deserved attention, but Black's attack appears to be faster. For example, 23...♖a8 24 gxh5 (24 ♖b2 ♕a7) 24...♘c5! 25 ♖b2 ♘b3+ 26 ♔b1 d4 27 ♕c2 c3 28 ♖xb3 (28 axb3 ♖a3!) 28...♗xb3 29 ♕xb3 (29 axb3? ♕a5) 29...♕a7 30 a4 ♖b8 31 ♗b5 cxb5 32 a5 ♕c5! 33 hxg6 ♕c4! with a decisive advantage. Instead, White decided to play defensively, but this did not succeed either.

23...♖a8 24 ♖b1 ♕a7 25 exd5

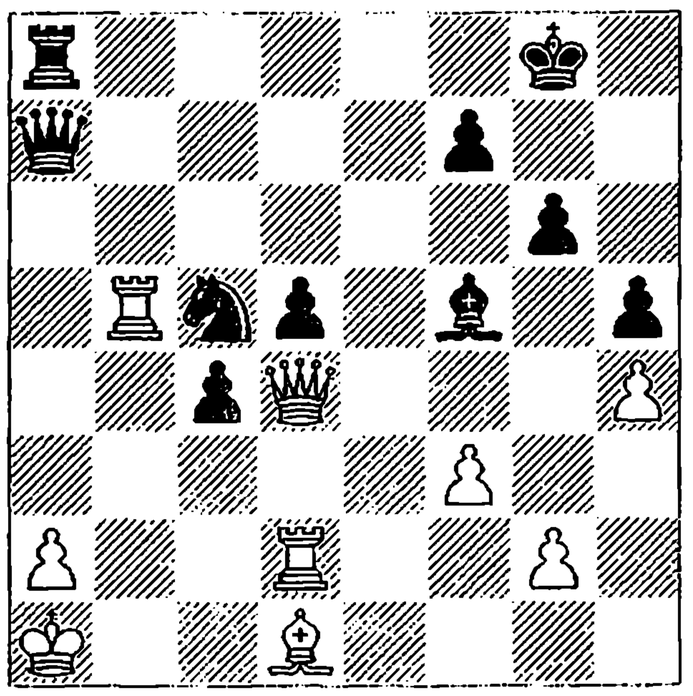
Otherwise Black could at an appropriate point capture on e4, clearing the g8-a2 diagonal for his bishop: 25 ♗d1 ♘c5 26 ♕d4 dxe4 27 fxe4 c3! 28 ♕xc3 ♕xa2+ 29 ♖xa2 ♖xa2#.

25...cxd5 26 ♗d1 ♘c5! 27 ♕d4 ♗f5!

An introduction to the decisive combination. Now 28 ♖bb2 ♕a3 with the threat of 29...c3 is winning for Black. But why not attack the knight?

28 ♖b5 *(D)*

B



28...♗c2!!

Not 28...♕a3? 29 ♕b2 and White can resist.

29 ♕b2

There is nothing better: 29 ♗xc2 ♕xa2#; 29 ♖xc2 ♘b3+, winning the queen; or 29 ♖b8+ ♖xb8 30 ♗xc2 ♕a3 31 ♖d1 c3.

29...♘b3+ 30 ♖xb3 cxb3 31 ♗xc2 ♕xa2+ 32 ♕xa2 ♖xa2+ 33 ♔b1 bxc2+

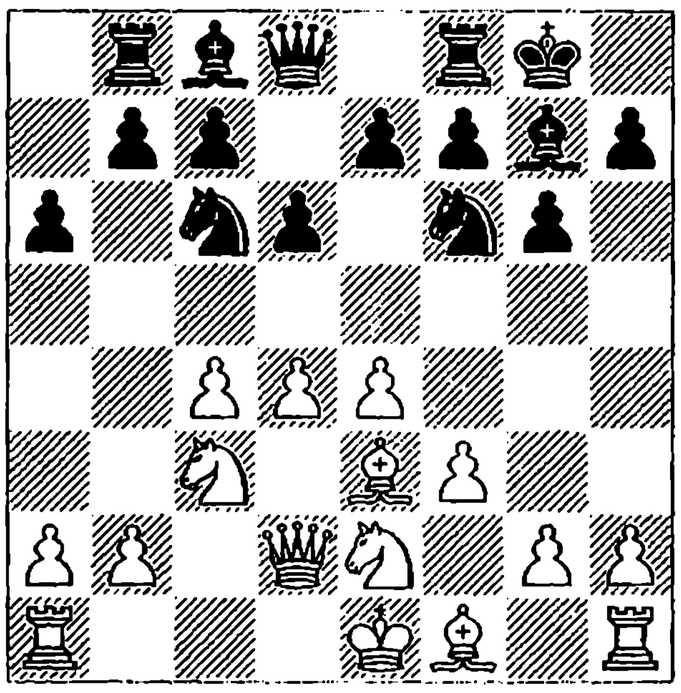
Forcing a transition to a pawn endgame with an extra pawn: 34 ♔c1 ♖a1+ 35 ♔xc2 ♖a2+. So...

0-1

Game 40
Savchenko – Golubev
Ukrainian Cht (Alushta) 1995

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 5 f3 0-0 6 ♗e3 ♘c6 7 ♘ge2 a6 8 ♕d2 ♖b8 *(D)*

W



9 ♖b1

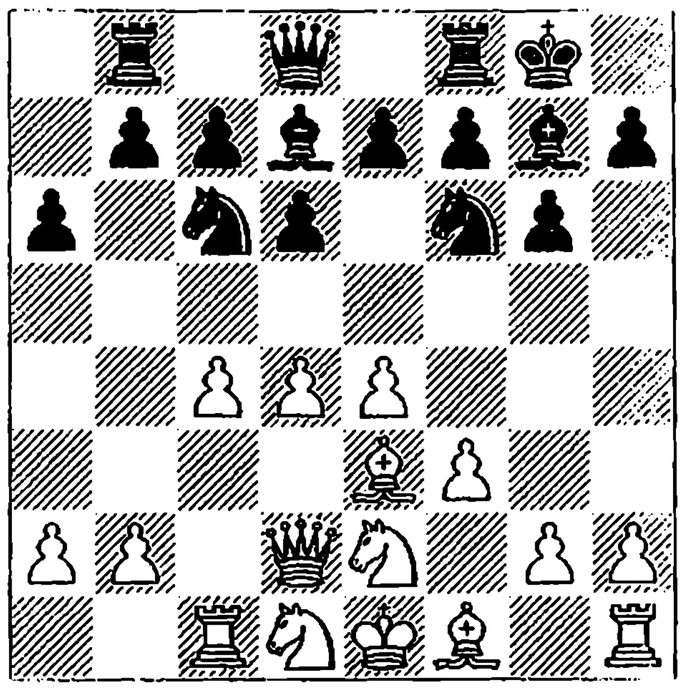
This is one of the cunning positional lines at White's disposal. We shall examine two other moves here:

a) 9 ♖c1 is linked with other ideas: first of all, it prevents 9...b5 (as this loses a pawn after 10 cxb5 axb5 11 ♘xb5). Usually Black plays 9...♗d7, and now:

a1) 10 b3 b5 (10...e5!? 11 d5 ♘e7 makes some sense; however, in such lines Black must always be aware of 12 g4 ♘e8 13 h4!? f5 14 g5!, when White grabs a lot of space) 11 d5 ♘e5 12 cxb5 axb5 13 ♘d4 ♕e8 (13...b4 14 ♘cb5!) 14 ♗e2 (14 a3! allows White to hope for a slight advantage) 14...e6 15 b4 ♘c4 (15...exd5 16 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 17 exd5 ♘c4 18 ♗xc4 bxc4 19 ♖xc4 ♗b5 was Raičević-Golubev, Belgrade 1991; after 20 ♖xc7! Black cannot claim full compensation) 16 ♗xc4 bxc4 17 b5 exd5 18 exd5 ♕e5 19 ♘c6 ♗xc6 20 dxc6 ♖fe8 21 ♕d1 with chances for both sides, Krumpacnik-Mukhutdinov, Budapest 1991.

a2) 10 ♘d1!? *(D)* is a very sophisticated move, which has become popular in recent years.

B



White prepares to meet ...b5 with c5!, and at the same time transfers his knight to f2. Now

a21) 10...a5 11 g3 b6 12 ♗g2 e5 13 d5 ♘c7 14 0-0 ♘h5 (I.Novikov-Efimenko, Montreal 2004) and here 15 g4! ♘f6 16 ♘g3 ♘e8 17 ♘c3 f5 18 gxf5 gxf5 19 f4! (Hazai) gives better chances for White.

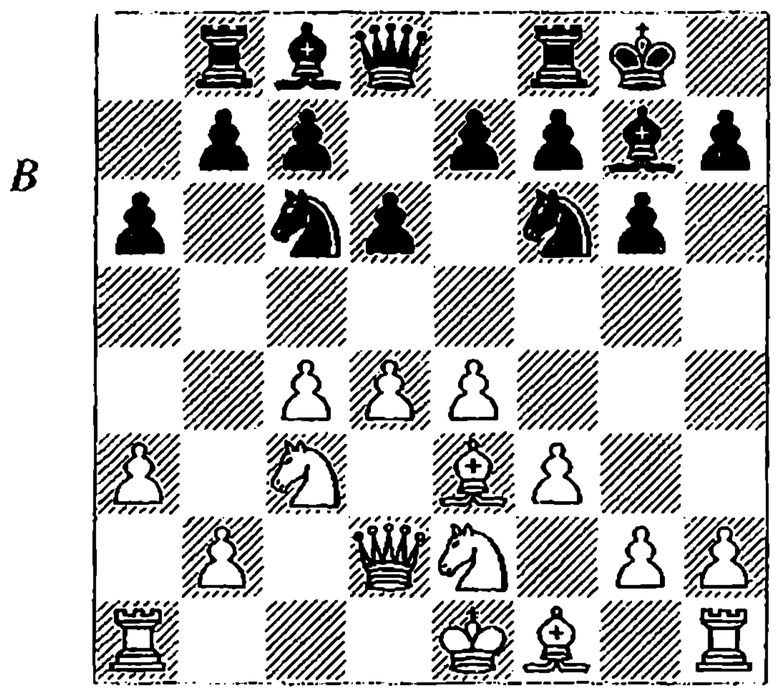
a22) 10...♖e8 11 g3!? (11 ♘f2 b5 12 c5 dxc5 13 ♖xc5 e5 14 d5 ♘e7 15 ♕c2 c6 16 dxc6 ♘xc6 17 ♖xc6 ♗xc6 18 ♕xc6 occurred in Graf-Nunn, Bundesliga 2002/3 where Black should probably have looked for counterchances by 18...♕a5+!?) 11...b5 12 c5 dxc5 13 ♖xc5 e5 14 d5 ♘d4 (Riazantsev-Bobrov, Voronezh open 2003) 15 ♘xd4!? exd4 16 ♗xd4 and I dislike this position for Black: blows on e4 do not seem to work properly, and if 16...♗f8 (with the idea to regain the pawn by 17...♘xd5 after the white rook retreats), then White can simply sacrifice the exchange on c5, obtaining pleasant compensation.

a23) 10...e5 11 d5 ♘e7 12 c5!? ♘e8 13 b4 f5 14 ♘ec3 ♘f6 15 ♗e2 ♔h8 and now not 16 0-0 f4 followed by 17...g5, but 16 ♘b2! (Graf-Nunn, Bundesliga 2000/1), planning ♘c4, when White's chances can be preferred.

a24) 10...b5 11 c5! d5!? (11...e6 12 ♘f2 b4 13 g3 ♘e7!, followed by ...♗b5, is safer, Sale-A.Fedorov, Abu Dhabi open 2005) 12 e5 ♘e8 Mecking-Golubev, Canarias en Red blitz 2004 Black is short of space, but he has resources based on ...f6. If 13 h4!?, then 13...f6 14 h5

fxe5 15 dxe5 ♘xe5 16 hxg6 hxg6 17 ♕xd5+ e6 18 ♕b3 ♘f6 19 ♘f4 ♘d5 20 ♘xd5 exd5 21 ♕xd5+ ♖f7 is interesting: Black has compensation for the pawn.

b) 9 a3 *(D)* is in many ways similar to 9 ♖b1, but there are a couple of apparently small differences.


B

Thus, after 9 a3 it is still possible for White to castle queenside, but the weakening of the b3-square can be important in some lines. It can be noted that 9 a3 has rarely occurred in recent grandmaster games, because its main adherents such as GM Alterman almost stopped playing chess entirely! Let's consider several options for Black:

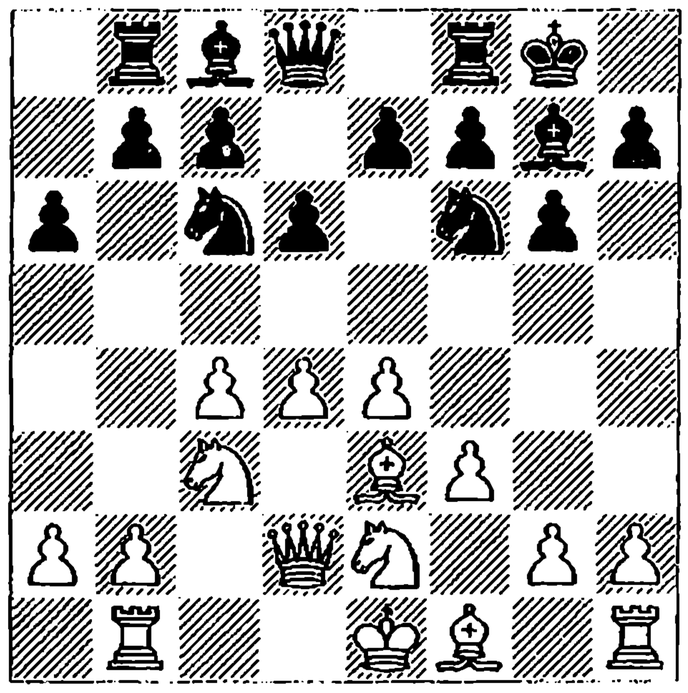
b1) 9...♘a5?! 10 ♘c1 b5 11 cxb5 axb5 12 ♘xb5 (12 ♗xb5!? is also possible) 12...c6 13 ♘c3 ♗e6 14 b4 ♘c4 15 ♗xc4 ♗xc4 16 ♘1e2 and Black does not have full compensation, Pudovkin-Vi.Semenov, Novorossisk open 1996.

b2) 9...♗d7 10 b4 ♖e8 and here the waiting move 11 ♖c1!? seems to be White's best option (11 g3 b5! 12 cxb5 axb5 13 ♗g2 e5 14 d5 ♘e7 15 0-0 c6 16 dxc6 ♗xc6 was fully acceptable for Black in Kaspi-O.Foisor, Formia open 1994).

b3) 9...b5 10 cxb5 axb5 11 d5!? (11 b4 is of course another possibility) 11...♘a5 12 ♘d4 e5 (12...♗d7 13 b4!) 13 ♘c6 ♘xc6 14 dxc6 ♗e6 15 ♘xb5 d5 16 ♗a7 ♖c8 17 ♗c5 (as in Dlugy-J.Howell, Sharjah jr Wch 1987) is an interesting line, but objectively Black's compensation is quite hard to prove.

b4) 9...♘d7!? 10 b4 (10 h4 ♘a5! 11 ♘c1 c5! gives Black counterplay) 10...♘b6 11 ♕a2 (after 11 ♕d3, 11...♗e6 allows 12 ♘d5!, so 11...f5!? is more advisable; not dangerous for Black is 11 ♘c1 e5 with the idea 12 ♘b3?! exd4 13 ♘xd4 ♘e5!) 11...e6 12 c5 ♘d7 13 ♖d1 dxc5 14 bxc5 ♕e7 (14...b6!?) 15 e5 b6 16 cxb6 ♘xb6 17 ♘g3 ♖d8 18 ♗e2 ♗f8! with double-edged play, Alterman-Sutovsky, Haifa 1996.

We return to 9 ♖b1 *(D)*:


B

9...b5

The question of whether Black should really play this remains open. But the alternatives are not well explored:

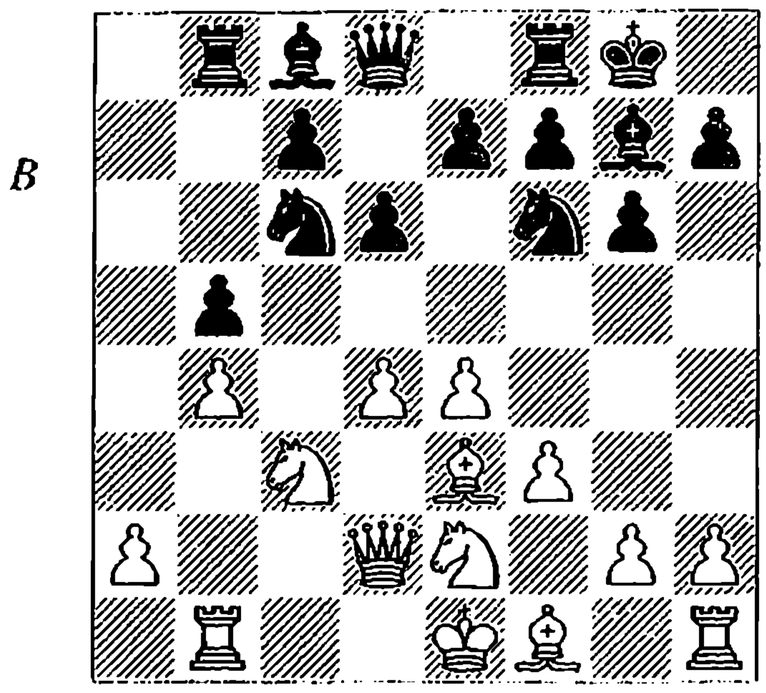
a) 9...♗d7 10 b4 ♖e8 (10...e5!? 11 d5 ♘e7) 11 a4 (11 h4!? h5 12 a4 deserves attention, rather than 11 g4 e5! 12 d5 ♘d4, Ribli-F.Portisch, Hungarian Ch 1975, with the idea 13 ♘xd4 exd4 14 ♗xd4 ♗xg4!) 11...a5 12 b5 ♘b4 13 ♘g3 e5 14 d5 b6 15 ♗e2 and White is probably slightly better, Dreev-Golubev, ACP Internet blitz 2004.

b) 9...♘d7 (somewhat less attractive here than after 9 a3) 10 h4 (10 b4!? ♘b6 11 ♘c1 e5 12 d5 ♘d4 and here White can play 13 ♘b3) 10...h5 11 ♗g5!? ♗f6 12 f4 e5 (12...♗g7!? 13 f5 ♘b6 deserves attention) 13 ♘d5 ♗xg5 14 hxg5 ♘xd4 15 ♘xd4 exd4 16 g4 c6 17 gxh5 cxd5 (17...♕e8!? is interesting) 18 hxg6 fxg6 19 ♕h2 ♔f7 20 ♕h7+ ♔e8 21 ♕xg6+ ♖f7 22 ♖h7 ♕e7 23 ♗e2 ♘f8 24 ♕xf7+ ♕xf7 25 ♖xf7 ♔xf7 26 ♗h5+ ♔g7 27 cxd5 ♘g6 28 ♗xg6 ♔xg6 29 ♔d2 with the better endgame for White, which Black nevertheless managed to hold in Ghaem Maghami-Volokitin, Lausanne Young Masters 2001.

c) 9...♖e8 10 b4 ♘d7 has also been seen several times in practice. The untested 11 ♗g5!? seems to be quite a logical idea for White.

d) 9...e5!? 10 d5 ♘e7 11 ♘g3 (11 g4!?) 11...♘e8 12 ♗d3 f5 13 exf5 ♘xf5 14 ♗g5 with a minimal advantage for White, Bu Xiangzhi-Xie Jun, Taiyuan 2004.

10 cxb5 axb5 11 b4! *(D)*



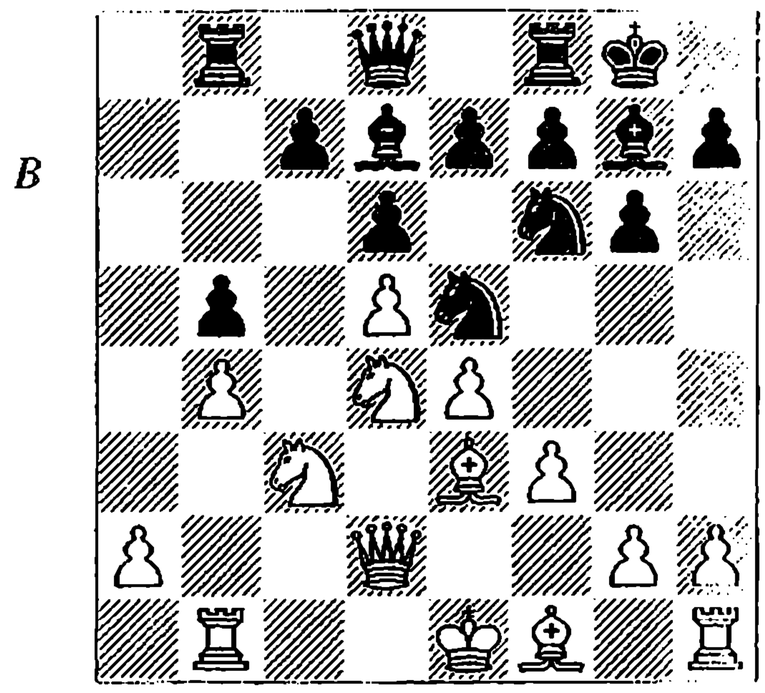
11...♗d7?!

11...e5 12 d5 ♘e7 is better, when White faces an important choice:

a) 13 ♘g3 ♗d7 14 ♗e2 (another rather unclear line is 14 ♗d3 c6 15 dxc6 ♗xc6 16 0-0 d5 17 ♗c5 d4 18 ♘cc2 ♘d7 19 ♗d6 ♖c8 20 f4 {Dreev-Efimenko, Moscow (Aeroflot open) 2002}, and here Black should play 20...exf4 21 ♕xf4 f5! 22 exf5 ♘c5! 23 ♗xc5 ♕d5! – Hazai) 14...c6 15 dxc6 ♗xc6 16 0-0 d5 17 ♗c5 d4!? 18 ♘d1 ♘d7!? (improving on Savchenko-A.Fedorov, St Petersburg (Petrov mem) 1996, which White won in style after 18...♘e8 19 ♘f2 ♘d6 20 ♖bc1 h5 21 ♗d3 ♔h7?! 22 ♘h3 ♗h6 23 ♘g5+ ♔g8 24 f4! h4 25 fxe5 ♘c4 26 ♖xc4 bxc4 27 ♗xc4 ♗b5 28 ♗xf7+ ♖xf7 29 ♖xf7 ♖b7? 30 ♘h5! gxh5 31 ♖f6 ♗g7 32 ♘e6 ♕e8 33 ♘xg7 1-0) 19 ♗d6 ♖c8 20 ♘b2 ♘b8 21 ♗c5 ♘a6, exchanging White's dark-squared bishop and obtaining sufficient counterchances, Jenkinson-McKenzie, Australian corr. Ch 2001.

b) 13 ♘c1!? is sharper: 13...♗d7 14 ♘b3 ♘h5 15 ♗d3 (rather than 15 ♘a5 f5 16 ♗d3 fxe4 17 fxe4 c6!, when the white king remains in the centre, Haba-Bobras, Koszalin open 1999) 15...f5 16 0-0 (Black can hardly hope to defend his weakened queenside by passive means, so he should try to counterattack on the kingside) 16...♘f4 (another idea is 16...f4!? 17 ♗a7 ♖b7 18 ♗f2 g5 19 ♘a5 ♖b8) 17 ♘a5 ♘xd3 18 ♕xd3 f4 19 ♗a7! ♖a8 20 ♗f2 ♕e8 21 ♖fc1 g5 22 ♖b2 ♗f6 23 ♘b1 ♔h8 24 ♖xc7 ♖g8 25 ♘d2 g4 26 fxg4 ♗xg4 27 ♘c6 (Haba-Raubal, Loosdorf open 1993) and now Black can continue 27...♘xc6 28 ♖xc6 ♕h5 29 ♘f1 ♗e7, planning to double rooks along the g-file.

12 d5! ♘e5 13 ♘d4! *(D)*



White has achieved an optimal arrangement of forces. Now Black's chances to create active counterplay are very low.

13...♕e8

Protecting the b5-pawn. A few games have seen 13...c6 14 ♗e2!? (after 14 dxe6 fxe6 15 ♘dxb5 Black has 15...♘xe4!? with unclear consequences) 14...exd5 15 exd5 ♖e8 16 0-0 with a pleasant advantage for White.

14 ♗e2 e6

14...c5 15 dxc6 ♗xc6 16 0-0 is also promising for White, Shamkovich-Chandler, London Lloyds Bank 1980.

15 0-0 ♘c4 16 ♗xc4 bxc4 17 ♖fe1!?

17 b5 exd5 18 exd5 allows 18...♕e5 with some counterplay.

17...e5

Here 17...exd5 18 exd5 ♕e5?? loses to 19 ♗g5!.

18 ♘c2?!

An inaccuracy. White aims to win the c4 pawn as quickly as possible, but the correct approach would be to prevent Black's counterplay on the kingside: 18 ♘de2! ♘h5 19 g4! ♘f6 20 ♘g3.

18...♘h5 19 ♘a3

19 ♕e2 f5 with the idea 20 ♕xc4 f4! and 21...g5, etc.

19...f5 20 exf5 ♗xf5 21 ♘e4 *(D)*

21...♖a8??

A senseless move, which ruins Black's game. Well, it was simply not my day. And I did not have the easiest of opponents: my percentage in encounters with my friend and compatriot Stanislav Savchenko is no higher than Shirov's in his games with Kasparov. 21...♘f4?! is also insufficient in view of 22 ♘xc4!? ♕b5 23 ♘a3 (not 23 ♘a3 ♕xd5! 24 ♗xf4 ♕a8!) and now 23...♘xd5? 24 a4 or 23...♕xd5? 24 ♘xf4. But

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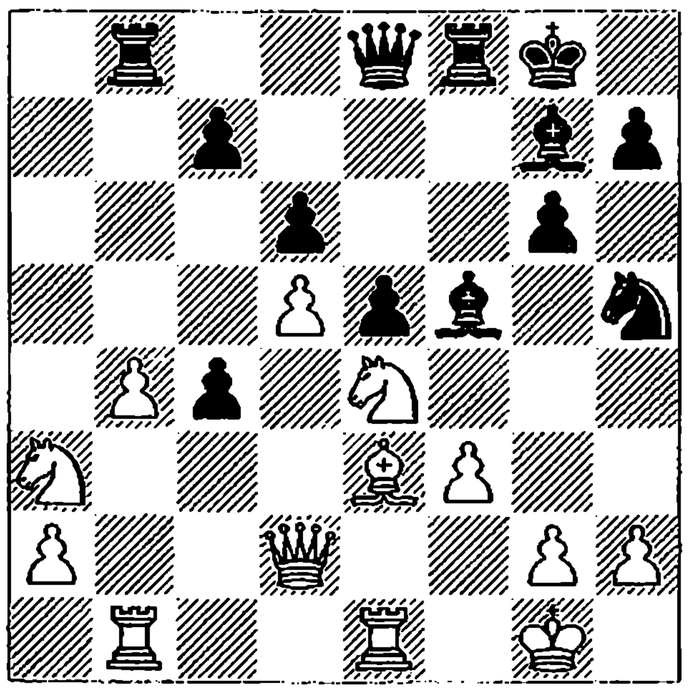


after 21...♘f6! with the idea 22 ♗g5 c3! Black's position is full of life.

22 ♘xc4 ♕b5 23 ♘a5

Now White has a healthy extra pawn and the rest is quite simple for him.

23...♘f4

After 23...♗xe4 24 fxe4 ♘f6 the only, but sufficient, way to protect the e4-pawn is 25 ♕c2!.

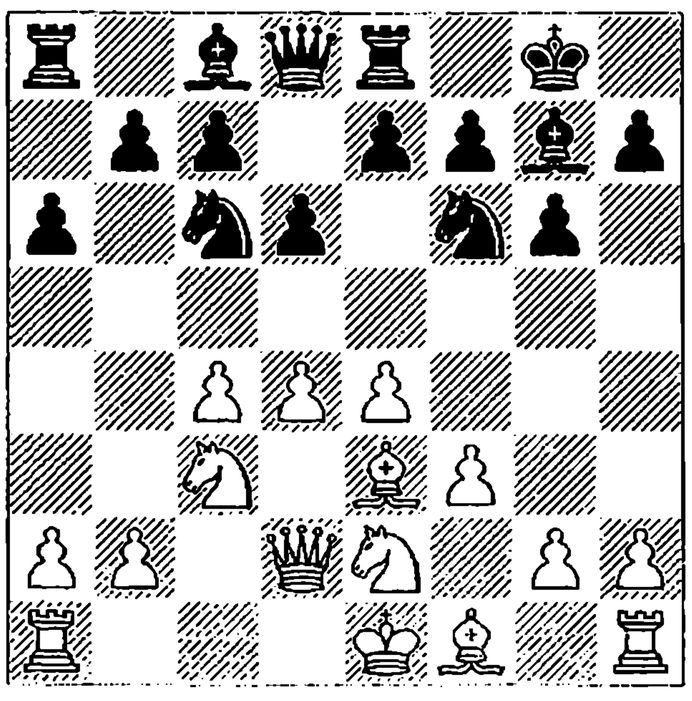
24 ♖bd1 ♗xe4 25 fxe4 ♗h6 26 ♔h1 ♖f7 27 g3 ♘h3 28 ♗xh6 ♘f2+ 29 ♔g2 ♕d7 30 ♖f1 ♕h3+ 31 ♔g1 ♘xd1 32 ♖xd1 ♕g4 33 ♖e1 ♔h8 34 ♕e2 ♕h3 35 ♗e3 ♖af8 36 ♘c4 ♕d7 37 ♔g2 ♕b5 38 a3 ♕a4 39 ♕b2 ♔g8 40 ♖c1 ♖f6 41 ♗h6 ♖8f7 42 b5 ♖f3 43 b6 ♖b3 44 ♕c2 1-0

Game 41
Piket – Golubev
Bundesliga 2002/3

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 5 f3 0-0 6 ♗e3 a6 7 ♕d2 ♘c6 8 ♘ge2 ♖e8!? *(D)*

The main, but nevertheless relatively seldom-used, alternative to the standard continuation 8...♖b8.

W



9 ♖c1!?

As after 8...♖b8, here too White has many options:

a) 9 g4 ♗d7 (9...♖b8!?) 10 h4 h5 11 gxh5 (11 g5!? ♘h7 12 f4) 11...♘xh5 12 ♖g1 b5! occurred in Van Beers-Golubev, Leuven open 1994. There followed 13 0-0-0?! e5! 14 ♗g5 ♕b8! 15 d5 ♘d4! with excellent play for Black. Instead, 13 ♘g3! could have led to crazy, double-edged complications: 13...e5 14 ♘xh5 (14 ♗g5!? ♘xd4! 15 ♕f2 ♘f6 16 h5) 14...♕xh4+ 15 ♘g3 exd4 16 ♗g5 dxc3 17 bxc3 ♘e5 (also possible is 17...♕xg5 18 ♕xg5 ♗xc3+ 19 ♔d1 ♗xa1) 18 0-0-0 (or 18 ♗xh4 ♘xf3+ 19 ♔d1 ♘xd2 20 ♔xd2 b4!) 18...♕h7 (18...♗h6!?) 19 ♖h1 ♘xf3 20 ♕e3 (20 ♖xh7 ♔xh7 21 ♕f4 ♘xg5 22 ♕xg5? ♗h6) 20...♘xg5 21 ♕xg5 ♖e5 22 ♕d2 ♖h5 23 ♘xh5 gxh5 with a still unclear outcome.

b) 9 d5!? is a very rare but poisonous move: 9...♘e5 (9...♘a5!? followed by ...c5 and ...b5 here works worse than in lines with an early ...♖b8, but still deserves attention) 10 ♘g3 c6 11 ♗e2 cxd5 (11...b5 12 cxb5 axb5? 13 dxc6 b4 14 ♘d5) 12 cxd5 e6 13 0-0 exd5 14 exd5 b5 15 a4! b4 16 ♘ce4 ♘xe4 17 ♘xe4 ♖b8 (or 17...♗f5 18 ♘g3!) and in Seirawan-Golubev, Dordrecht blitz 2003, 18 a5! would have fixed White's advantage.

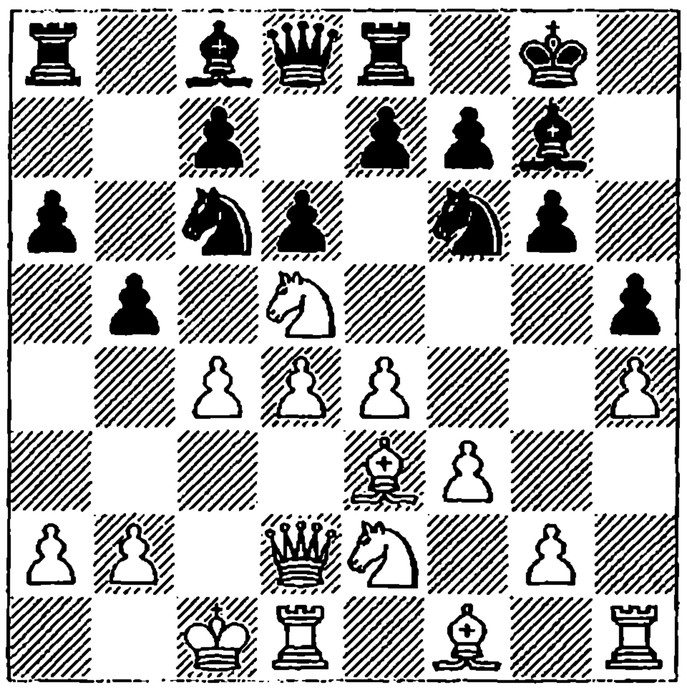
c) 9 0-0-0 b5! 10 ♘g3 bxc4 11 ♗xc4 ♗d7 12 ♗h6 ♗xh6 13 ♕xh6 e5 14 dxe5 ♘xe5 15 ♗b3 a5 16 a3 ♕b8 and Black developed serious counterplay in Burnay-Golubev, Eupen open 1997.

d) 9 ♘c1 e5 10 d5 ♘d4 11 ♘b3 (11 ♘1e2 c5 12 dxc6 and now 12...bxc6 transposes while 12...♘xc6!? 13 ♘d5 b5! 14 ♗b6 ♕d7 15 ♘c7 ♖b8 16 ♘xe8 ♕xe8 with some compensation for the exchange occurred in Beliavsky-Kasparov, Moscow 1981) 11...c5 (11...♘xb3 12 axb3 c5 13 b4! cxb4 14 ♘a4 ♘d7 15 ♕xb4 appears to be strategically better for White, Gheorghiu-Nemet, Biel 1983) 12 dxc6 bxc6 (12...♘xb3? 13 cxb7! ♗xb7 14 axb3 leaves White a pawn up) 13 ♘xd4 exd4 14 ♗xd4 d5!? (14...♖b8 transposes to Game 38, Atalik-Golubev) 15 cxd5 cxd5 16 e5 (the more critical 16 ♗xf6!? can be answered with 16...♗xf6 17 ♘xd5 ♗xb2!? 18 ♕xb2 ♕xd5, when it is not so easy for White to complete his development) 16...♘d7 17 ♗e2 (17 f4 can be answered by

17...♗h6!? or 17...f6 18 e6 ♘f8) 17...♘xe5 18 0-0 ♘c4! 19 ♗xc4 dxc4 20 ♖ad1 ♗xd4+ 21 ♕xd4 ♕xd4+ 22 ♖xd4 ♗f5 (White has nothing special in this endgame) 23 ♖fd1 ♖ab8 24 ♖1d2 ♗d3 25 ♔f2 ♖e6 26 b3 ♖c6 27 ♘d5 ♔g7 28 g4 (28 ♘f4 ♗b1! 29 bxc4 ♖b4) 28...cxb3 29 axb3 ♗b1 30 b4 g5 31 f4 gxf4 32 ♘xf4 ♖cb6 33 ♘d5 ♖b5 34 h4 a5 35 bxa5 ½-½ Vyzhmanavin-Golubev, Alushta 1994.

e) The most unpleasant line for Black is considered to be 9 h4 h5 10 0-0-0 b5 11 ♘d5! *(D)*.

B



11...bxc4 12 ♘xf6+ ♗xf6 13 g4 hxg4 14 h5 g5 (if 14...e5 15 hxg6 fxg6 16 d5 ♘d4, Kornev-Kurnosov, Tomsk 2001, then 17 ♘xd4 exd4 18 ♗xd4 ♗xd4 19 ♕xd4 ♕g5+ 20 ♖d2 ♕e5 21 ♕xc4 gxf3 22 ♕xc7 {Gallagher} with an initiative for White after 22...♖e7 23 ♕d8+ ♖e8 24 ♕h4! ♖a7 25 ♖dh2) 15 ♗xg5 e5 16 ♗xf6 ♕xf6 17 fxg4 (17 d5 gives nothing special to White after 17...gxf3 18 dxc6 fxe2 19 ♗xe2 ♕f4 20 ♗xc4 ♗e6 – Lautier) 17...exd4 18 g5! (18 ♘xd4 ♘xd4 19 ♕xd4 ♕f4+!) 18...♕f3 19 g6 (Lautier-Piket, France vs Netherlands 1990). But here 19...♗g4!? deserves attention, and it is not clear how White can obtain the advantage.

9...♗d7 10 b3 e6!?

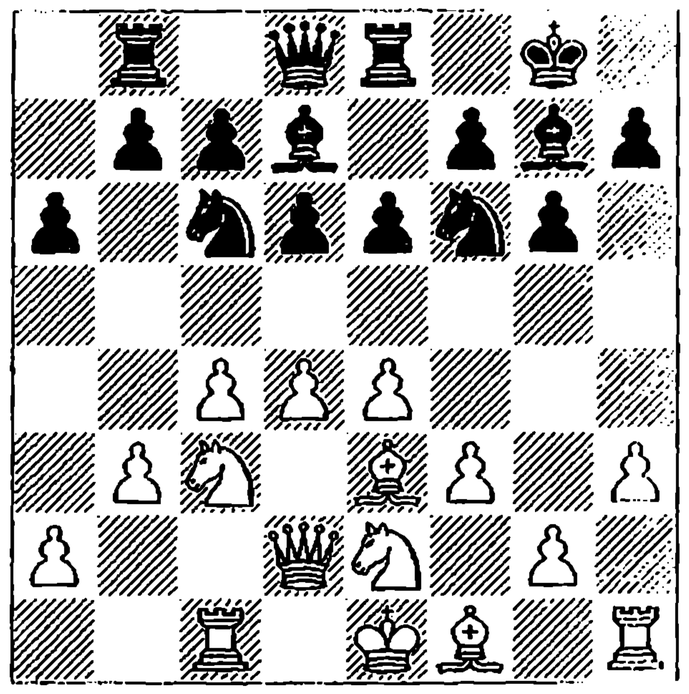
10...♖b8 is strongly met, according to Atalik, by 11 d5! ♘a5 (11...♘e5 12 h3!) 12 ♘g3 c5 13 e5! dxe5 14 ♗xc5.

11 h3!?

Another waiting move, though this time an atypical one. After 11 g4 e5 12 d5 ♘d4 13 ♘xd4 exd4 14 ♗xd4 ♗xg4 15 ♗xf6 (15 fxg4? ♘xe4) 15...♗xf6 16 fxg4 ♗g5 17 ♕c2 ♗xc1 18 ♕xc1 ♕h4+ followed by ...♕xg4, ...♖e5 and ...♖ae8 Black is likely to have a fully viable game. If 11 ♗g5, then 11...♕b8!? deserves attention.

11...♖b8 *(D)*

W



12 d5?!

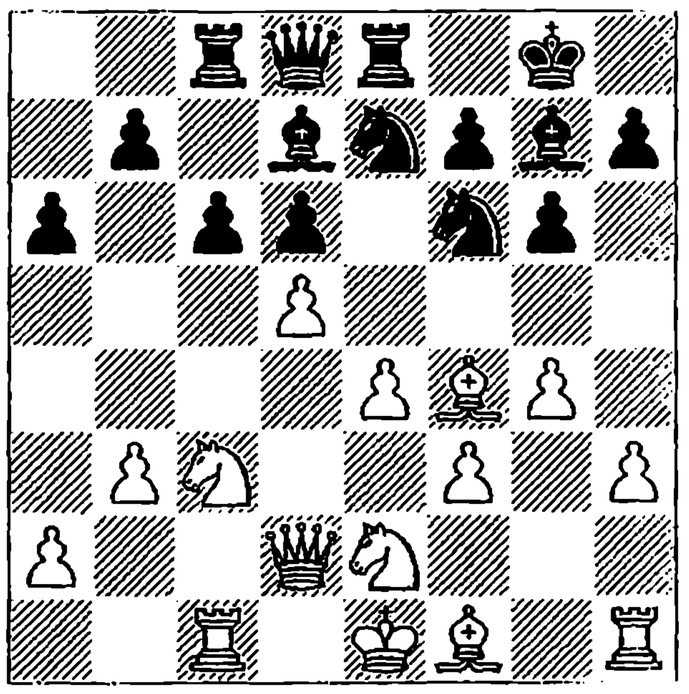
An ineffective advance – Black is well prepared to meet it. Better is 12 g4 (Piket) or 12 ♗g5!?.

12...exd5 13 cxd5 ♘e7

Not, of course, 13...♘e5?? 14 f4, when the knight is trapped. Now Black plans to open the game by ...c6.

14 ♗f4 ♖c8 15 g4 c6! *(D)*

W



16 dxc6

The line 16 ♗xd6 cxd5 17 e5 d4! 18 ♕xd4 ♘c6 19 ♕f4 ♘h5! 20 gxh5 ♗xe5 21 ♗xe5 ♘xe5, with an attack for Black, is given by Notkin, who annotated the game in *Chess Today*.

16...♗xc6 17 ♕xd6

The capture of the d6-pawn is almost forced – otherwise Black would continue with ...d5.

17...♕a5

17...♕b6?! is strongly answered by 18 ♘a4 ♕a7 19 ♕c5. According to Gallagher, Black could have tried 17...♘d7!?, but I preferred a more active continuation.

18 b4!

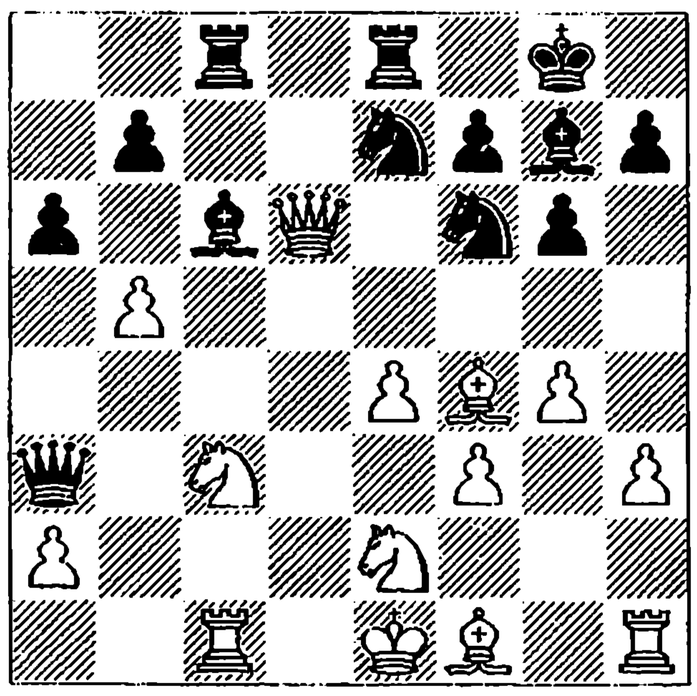
18 ♕d2? ♖ed8 19 ♕e3 ♘fd5! is just losing for White.

18...♕a3

After 18...♕b6?!, there is again 19 ♘a4! ♕a7 20 ♕c5!.

19 b5! *(D)*

White wants to exchange the queens, even at the cost of a pawn. There was no alternative: 19 ♖b1? ♘xe4 20 ♘xe4 ♕xf3 and White can resign.



B

19...♕a5!?

A remarkable sacrifice. Black just wants to keep the queens on the board, hoping to attack White's king. After 19...♕xd6 20 ♗xd6 axb5 White can simply play 21 ♗g2!?, when Black has potential problems with his doubled pawns.

20 bxc6 ♘xc6!

With the threat of 22...♖ed8. I believed in my compensation at this point, but was, I must admit, happy that I was not playing against a computer. Further analysis confirms that the position is extremely complex.

21 ♕d2!

Worse is 21 ♗d2?! ♘e5!? with a dangerous attack.

21...♘b4?

Tempting, but wrong. An interesting idea was shown by Gallagher in his notes at the website *ChessPublishing.com*: 21...♖cd8! 22 ♘d5 ♕xd2+ 23 ♗xd2 (23 ♔xd2?! ♘xd5 24 exd5 ♖xd5+ 25 ♔c2 ♘b4+) 23...♘xd5 24 exd5 ♘e5 and even without queens, Black's initiative is very dangerous.

22 ♗d6?

22 ♗e3!? ♖ed8 23 ♘d4! was a good defence. I do not see how Black can improve on the following line: 23...♘e8! 24 ♗e2! ♕b6 25 ♘b3 ♖xd2 26 ♗xb6 ♖c2! 27 ♖xc2 ♘xc2+ 28 ♔f2 and after Black captures on c3 with either rook or bishop, White has a slightly better endgame. 22 ♘d4!? is even more critical, when it is hard to prove that Black has sufficient compensation for the piece.

22...♖cd8?

The correct way to attack was found by Notkin: 22...♗h6! 23 ♕xh6 (23 ♘f4 ♖ed8; 23 ♕d4 ♘c6! 24 ♕xf6 ♖e6!) 23...♘d3+ 24 ♔d1 (24 ♔d2? ♘xc1 25 ♔xc1 ♖xc3+ 26 ♘xc3 ♕xc3+ 27 ♔b1 ♕xf3 and White collapses) 24...♖cd8! and despite his two extra rooks, White is in trouble. 22...♘fd5?! is less promising: 23 a3! (23 exd5?! ♘xd5 24 ♘d1 ♕xd2+ 25 ♔xd2 ♖cd8 – Sadler) 23...♕xa3 24 ♘xd5 ♘d3+ 25 ♕xd3 ♕xd3 26 ♖xc8 ♖xc8 27 ♘e7+ ♔h8 28 ♘xc8.

23 a3?

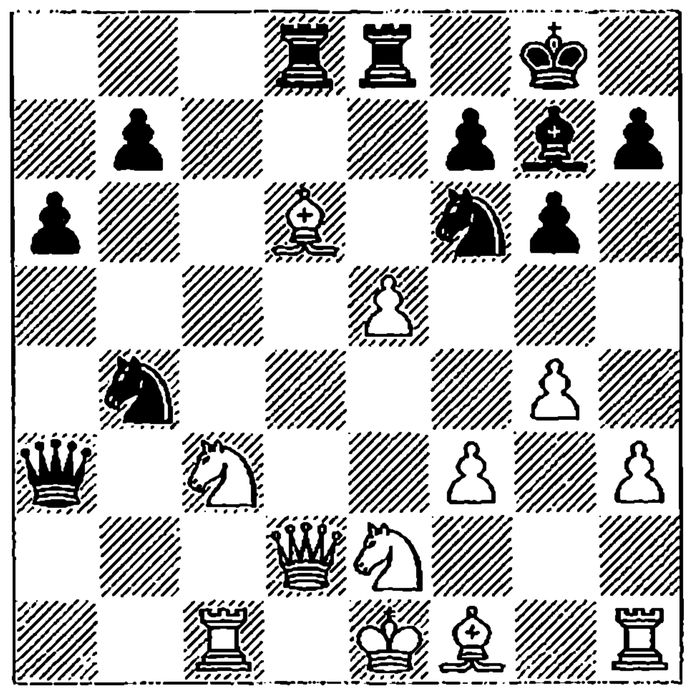
23 ♗xb4! ♕xb4 24 ♕c2 is much stronger. After 24...♗h6!? 25 ♖d1 ♗e3 Black retains some vague compensation for the piece.

23...♕xa3?

Again 23...♗h6! was possible: 24 f4 (24 ♕d4? ♘c6 25 ♕xf6 ♗g5!) 24...♕xa3 25 ♗xb4 ♕xb4 26 ♖b1 ♕c4 27 ♕a2 ♕xa2 28 ♘xa2 ♘xe4 (Reeh) with menacing compensation for the knight.

24 e5? *(D)*

A losing mistake. After 24 ♔f2! with the idea 24...♘d3+ 25 ♕xd3 ♖xd6 26 ♕e3, or even 24 ♗xb4, the outcome would remain unclear.



B

24...♘xg4!

24...♗h6! 25 ♕xh6 ♘d3+ 26 ♔d1 ♘xe5 also wins.

25 hxg4 ♗xe5 26 ♔f2

After 26 ♘e4, 26...♘d3+ 27 ♔d1 ♖xd6 28 ♘xd6 ♗xd6 is sufficient: White has no defence against the numerous threats.

26...♖xd6 27 ♕h6 ♘d3+ 28 ♔g2 ♘xc1 29 ♘e4?!

29 ♘b1 is better, but White's position is lost anyway. For example, 29...♕a2 30 ♕xc1 ♖d3!?, etc.

29...♘xe2 30 ♗xe2 ♕a2 31 ♕xh7+ ♔f8 32 ♖e1 ♖d1?!

32...♖c6! is immediately decisive, but of course I had overlooked White's 34th.

33 ♖xd1 ♕xe2+ 34 ♘f2

Now White is 'only' two pawns down.

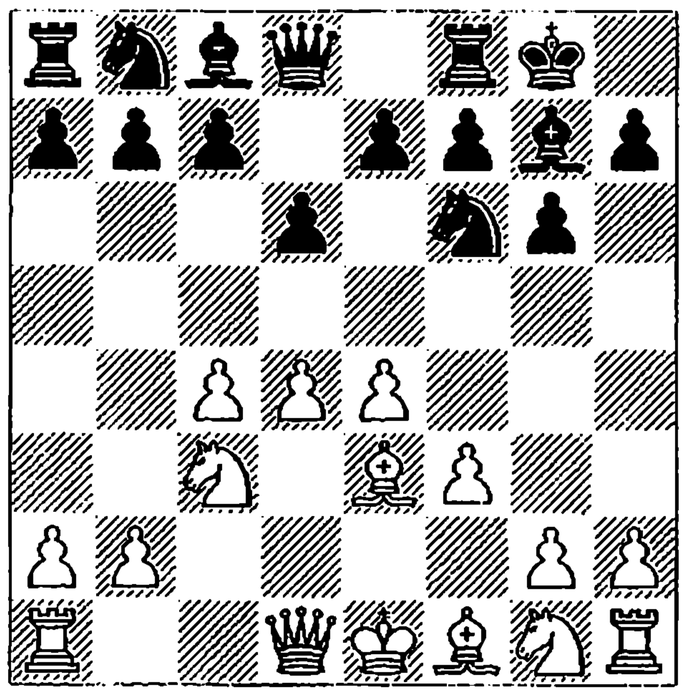
34...♗g7 35 ♖d7 ♕b5 36 ♖c7 ♕b6 37 ♖c2 ♕b1 38 ♖c7 ♕b2 39 ♕h4 ♔g8 40 g5 ♗d4 0-1

The time-trouble has ended so White resigned.

This was one of my rare successes in Sunday Bundesliga games, which begin at 9 a.m. (Sokolov-Golubev from this book is a more typical example). This time, I missed the Saturday round because the Moldavian airline failed to send their aeroplane to Odessa. And it seems this helped.

Game 42
Rogozenko – Golubev
Nikolaev Z 1993

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 5 f3 0-0 6 ♗e3 *(D)*



6...c5

The largest mass of theory in the Sämisch involves 6...e5, but I have hardly ever played it seriously after the following crushing defeat in the USSR qualification tournament for the world junior championship: 7 d5 c6 8 ♗d3 cxd5 (at Bucharest 1996 I witnessed the game Savchenko-I.Nikolaidis, which continued 8...b5 9 a3 ♗a6?! 10 cxb5 cxd5 11 bxa6 d4 and now 12 ♘ge2! {suggested by Nevednichy} 12...dxe3 13 ♗b5! might have given White a clear advantage) 9 cxd5 ♘e8 10 ♘ge2 f5 (10...♗h6, with the standard idea 11 ♗xh6 ♕h4+, is perhaps better) 11 exf5 gxf5 12 0-0 ♘d7 13 ♕d2 ♕e7 14 ♔h1 ♘df6 15 ♖ae1 ♔h8? 16 ♘g3! (now Black is unable to defend his f5-pawn in a normal way) 16...♕f7 17 ♗xf5 ♘xd5 18 ♘xd5 ♗xf5 19 f4 ♕e6 20 fxe5 dxe5 21 ♗c5 ♖f7 22 ♘e7 ♗g4 23 ♖xf7 ♕xf7 24 ♖f1 ♕xa2 25 ♕b4! ♗e6 26 ♕xb7 ♖d8 27 b4 a5? 28 bxa5 ♕xa5 29 ♘c6 ♕xc5 30 ♘xd8 ♗d5 31 ♕d7! ♘f6 32 ♖xf6 ♗xf6 33 ♕e8+ ♗g8 34 ♘f7+ ♔g7 35 ♘f5+ ♔g6 36 ♘7d6+ 1-0 Oll-Golubev, USSR jr-Wch qual (Klaipeda) 1985.

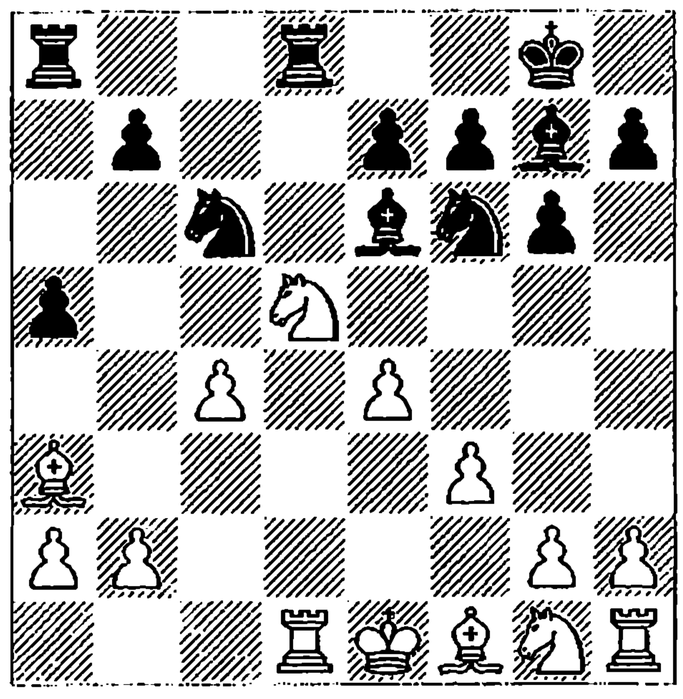
7 dxc5

The critical move: White accepts the pawn sacrifice. Still, the most popular move nowadays is 7 ♘ge2, after which Ivanchuk followed Gallagher's 2004 suggestion 7...♕a5!? in a game at the 2005 Canadian open.

7...dxc5 8 ♕xd8 ♖xd8 9 ♗xc5 ♘c6 10 ♗a3

Another important line is 10 ♘d5 ♘d7! 11 ♗xe7 ♘xe7 12 ♘xe7+ ♔f8 13 ♘d5 ♗xb2, where Black is also doing quite well.

10...a5 11 ♖d1 ♗e6 12 ♘d5 *(D)*



12...♘b4!!

A very important idea, introduced by Shirov in a Bundesliga game against Kramnik. Black has a colossal development advantage, and is ready to sacrifice one more pawn for the initiative. Earlier Black used to play 12...♗xd5 13 cxd5 ♘b4, which allows 14 ♗b5. I knew that Rogozenko played this line with White and hoped that he was not familiar with Shirov's game, which was played only few months before the Nikolaev Zonal. 1993 was still effectively

in the pre-Internet era. Indeed, Doru did not know that game (which I myself had found in a German chess magazine). Eventually, 12...♘b4 radically diminished White's enthusiasm for the 7 dxc5 line, but in this particular game I faced unexpected problems...

13 ♘xe7+

13 ♗xb4?! axb4 14 ♘xb4 ♘d7 15 ♖d2 ♘c5 is just better for Black according to Shirov.

13...♔h8 14 ♘d5

White deviates from the stem game. 14 ♖xd8+ ♖xd8 15 ♘d5 ♘c2+ and now:

a) 16 ♔f2 ♘xa3 17 bxa3 b5 (17...♘d7!? 18 ♘h3 ♗d4+ 19 ♔g3 ♗e5+ 20 f4 ♗b2 – Hertneck) 18 ♘h3 ♖c8 19 ♘hf4 bxc4 20 ♘xe6 fxe6 21 ♘b6 ♘xe4+ 22 ♔e3 ♖c6 23 ♔xe4 ♖xb6 24 ♗xc4 ♖c6! (Hazai) and Black reaches equality.

b) 16 ♔d2 ♘xa3 17 bxa3 b5! 18 ♘h3 (½-½ Kramnik-Shirov, Bundesliga 1992/3) 18...bxc4 19 ♗xc4 ♘xd5 20 exd5 ♗xd5 21 ♗xd5 ♖xd5+ 22 ♔c2 ♖c5+ 23 ♔d2 ♖d5+ = Hertneck.

14...b5

An 'interesting move' according to Shirov's annotations. Later games showed that Black has no problems after the more obvious 14...♘c2+! 15 ♔f2 ♘xa3 16 bxa3 b5! (16...♘d7!? and 16...♗f8!? are of interest as well).

15 ♗xb4!

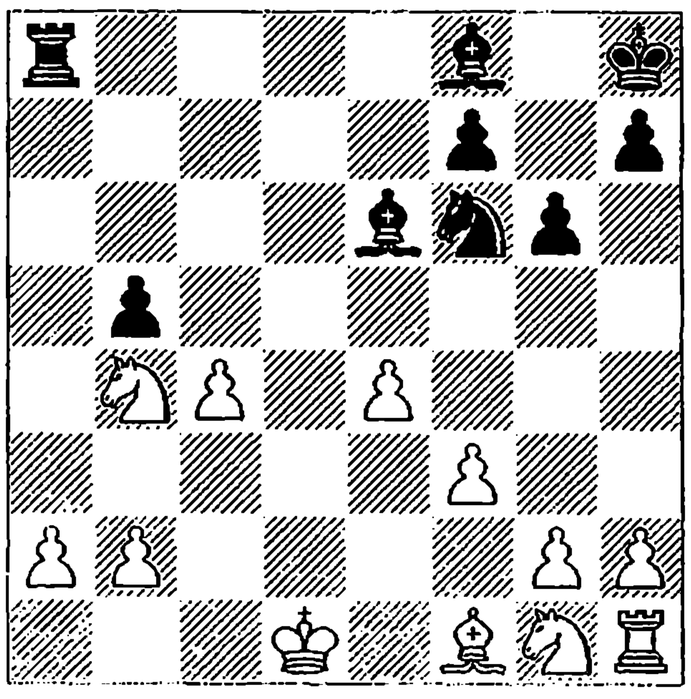
15 ♘xb4? ♖xd1+ 16 ♔xd1 axb4 17 ♗xb4 ♖xa2 favours Black.

15...axb4 16 ♘xb4 ♖xd1+?!

Possibly Black's 14th was dubious, but it seems that here he still could obtain a more or less acceptable game by 16...bxc4 17 ♖xd8+ (alternatively, 17 ♘e2 ♖db8 18 a3 ♗f8 19 ♘d4 ♗xb4+ 20 axb4 ♖xb4) 17...♖xd8 18 ♘e2 ♗h6 19 ♘c3 ♗c1 20 ♘cd5 ♗xb2 21 ♗xc4 ♖c8.

17 ♔xd1 ♗f8 *(D)*

W



18 ♘c2!

An unpleasant surprise! Shirov considered only 18 ♘d5 ♖xa2! 19 ♔c2 ♗g7 (19...♖a1!?) 20 ♔b1 ♖xb2+ 21 ♔xb2 ♘xe4+ followed by 22...♘f2 and 23...♘xh1 with equality. Rogozenko's move is stronger: it allows White to consolidate, preserving at least one extra pawn. Well, the sad truth is that players, and not anyone else, are responsible for moves which they make by their own hands.

18...♖xa2

Or 18...bxc4 19 ♘e2 ♖xa2 20 ♔c1.

19 ♔c1! ♘d7

19...bxc4 or 19...♗xc4 is met by 20 ♘e2.

20 ♔b1

According to Rogozenko, more precise was 20 ♘e2 ♘c5 21 ♔b1 ♖a8, transposing to the game.

20...♖a8

Here Black had the additional possibility of 20...♖a6 21 ♘e2 ♖d6 (Rogozenko). This is indeed interesting, but can hardly solve all Black's problems either.

21 ♘e2! ♘c5

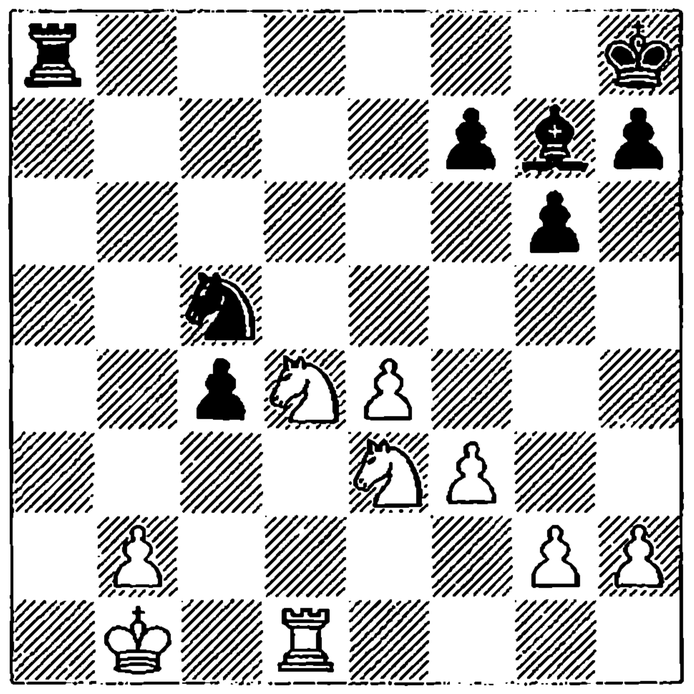
Or 21...♗xc4 22 ♘c3!.

22 ♘ed4! ♗xc4

Black finally decides to grab that c4-pawn and his development advantage disappears. But it is hard to suggest any good alternative.

23 ♗xc4 bxc4 24 ♘e3 ♗g7 25 ♖d1 *(D)*

B



It is time to sum up: Black does not have sufficient compensation for the pawn, and must fight for a draw – with unclear prospects to achieve it. After mutual inaccuracies in time-trouble, I was lucky enough to escape.

25...h5 26 ♘c6

26 ♘xc4 ♖a4! 27 b3 ♘xb3 28 ♘xb3 ♖xc4 and it is very hard for White to win.

26...♖a4

26...♖a6 is no better in view of 27 ♖d8+ or 27 ♘d8!?.

27 ♖d8+

White should prefer 27 e5!, when 27...♘d3? is refuted by 28 b3.

27...♔h7 28 ♘c2 ♘d3 29 ♘2d4 ♖a6 30 ♖b8 ♘e1

Here 30...♗xd4!? 31 ♘xd4 ♖d6 deserved attention.

31 ♖b4 ♘xg2 32 ♖xc4 ♘e3 33 ♖b4?

33 ♖c3 is also imprecise, due to 33...♖xc6! 34 ♘xc6 ♗xc3 35 bxc3 ♘f1, but 33 ♖c5! preserves the advantage.

33...♘f1! 34 h3 ♘d2+ 35 ♔c2 ♘xf3

Regaining the pawn.

36 ♘xf3 ♖xc6+ 37 ♔d3 ♔h6 38 ♖b7

The position after 38 h4!? is possibly still a bit better for White.

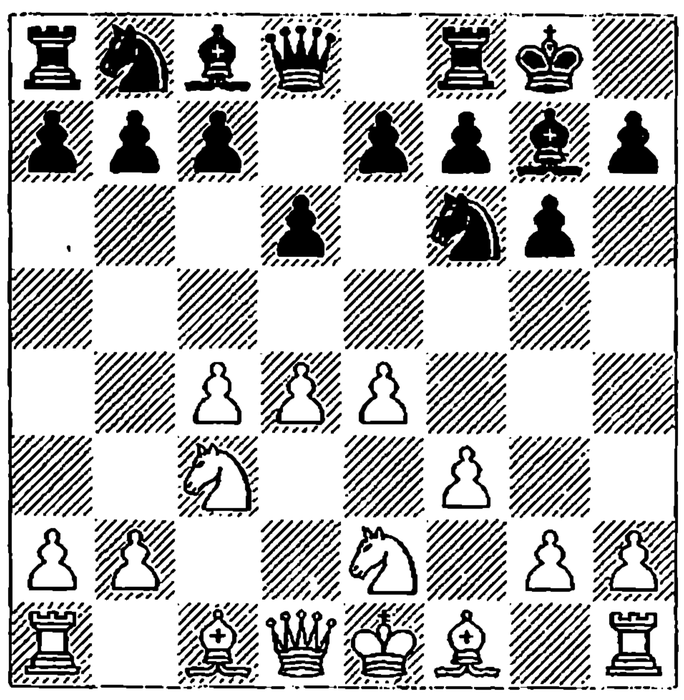
38...g5 39 ♖xf7 ½-½

Game 43
Dreev – Golubev
Alushta 1994

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 5 f3 0-0 6 ♗g5

Alexei Dreev is certainly the most consistent adherent of the Sämisch System among the world elite. However, the standard main move 6 ♗e3 has never been his favourite choice. In the past he preferred the text-move, which completely prevents the immediate 6...e5? (it is refuted by 7 dxe5 dxe5 8 ♕xd8 ♖xd8 9 ♘d5). Nowadays Dreev usually opts for 6 ♘ge2 *(D)*.

B



This works quite well against 6...e5 (7 ♗g5! is unpleasant for Black), and also, importantly, gives White the possibility of leaving the bishop on c1 for the time being after 6...c5 7 d5 e6 8 ♘g3 exd5 9 cxd5. I did not plan to provide detailed coverage of lines with ...c5 in this Sämisch chapter, but will refer to a few recent games by Dreev: 9...h5 10 ♗e2 ♘h7 11 ♗e3 a6 12 a4 ♘d7 (12...h4 13 ♘f1 ♘d7 14 ♗f2 f5 15 exf5 gxf5 16 f4 ♖e8 17 ♘e3 ♗d4 18 ♘xf5 ♗xf2+!? 19 ♔xf2 ♖f8 20 g4 hxg3+ 21 hxg3 ♖xf5 22 ♖xh7 ♔xh7 23 ♗d3 and after 23...♘f6 24 g4 c4 25 ♗xf5+ ♗xf5 26 gxf5 ♕b6+ 27 ♔f3 ♕xb2 28 ♕e1! {Dreev-Gallagher, Gibraltar Masters 2004} Black can save himself by 28...♕h2!, but 23...♕g5! is even stronger – Gallagher) 13 0-0 h4 14 ♘h1 f5 15 ♕d2 ♕f6 16 exf5 (the game Dreev-Karpov, Reykjavik rpd KO 2004, where Karpov needed to win to qualify for the next round and for the first time in his career used the King's Indian, continued 16 f4 fxe4 17 ♘f2 ♕e7 18 ♘cxe4 ♘df6 19 ♘xf6+ ♕xf6 20 b4?! ♖e8 21 ♖a3 ♕b2 22 ♕xb2 ♗xb2 23 ♖b3 cxb4 24 ♖xb2 ♖xe3 25 a5 ♘f6 26 ♗d3 b5! 27 ♖xb4 ♗f5 with an advantage for Black; only a miracle allowed White to escape with a draw in the end) 16...gxf5 17 ♘f2 f4 18 ♘g4 ♕g5 19 ♗f2 ♘e5 20 ♘e4 ♕e7 21 ♘xe5 ♗xe5 22 ♖ae1 ♗f5 23 ♗d3 b5 24 ♖e2 h3 25 g4 ♗xe4 26 ♗xe4 ♘g5 27 ♔h1 ♕g7 28 b3 ♖ab8 29 a5 ♖bc8 30 ♗h4 c4 31 bxc4 ♖xc4 with excellent chances for Black, who soon won in Dreev-Radjabov, Warsaw Ech 2005.

Returning to the nuances of 6 ♘ge2, this move hardly makes any difference if Black aims to play the system with ...♘c6, and perhaps gives Black more reasons to use the system with ...a6, ...c6, and ...b5 than White's other 6th-move options. For example, 6...a6 7 ♗e3 c6 8 ♕d2 b5 9 h4 h5 10 ♗h6 e5 11 0-0-0 ♘bd7 12 ♔b1 ♕e7 13 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 14 ♘c1 (Morozevich-Svidler, San Luis FIDE Wch 2005) and here 14...♘b6!? (Baburin) gives Black reasonable play.

We now return to 6 ♗g5 *(D)*:

6...♘c6

I once tried 6...a6 7 ♕d2 ♘bd7!?, which was one of Kasparov's weapons against the Sämisch in the 1990s. My opponent surprised me with extremely rare 8 0-0-0!? (instead of the usual 8 ♘ge2 and 8 ♘h3) and after 8...c6 (neither 8...c5 9 dxc5 followed by 10 e5 nor the pawn sacrifice 8...b5!? attracted me during the game) 9 h4! h5

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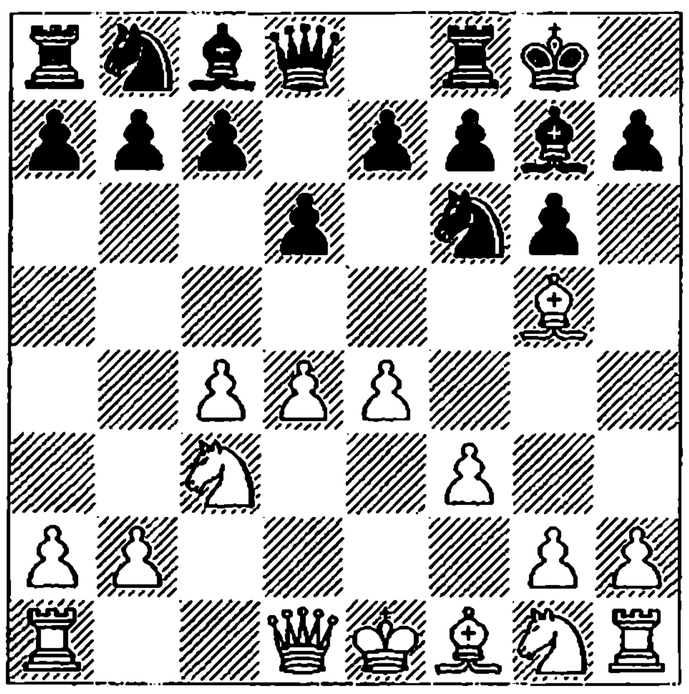

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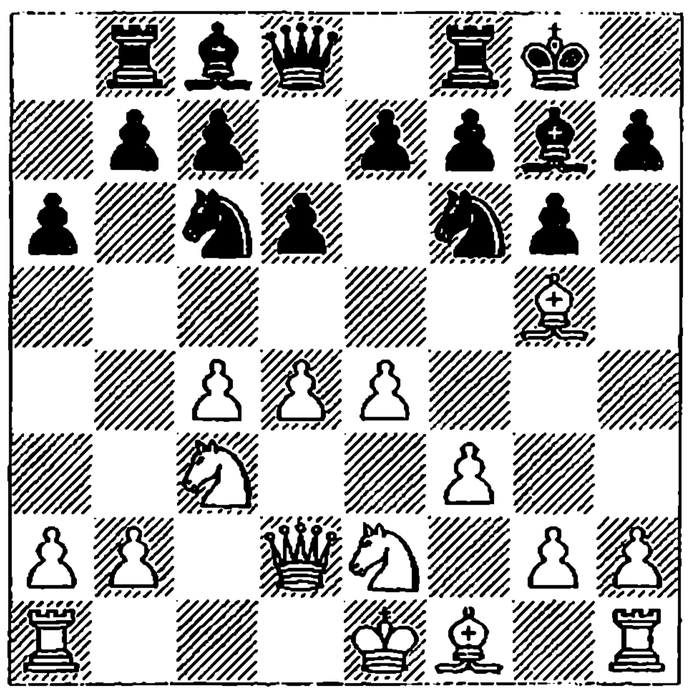

(9...h5 10 e5!? ♘e8 11 e6!? fxe6 12 ♕c2) 10 h5 ♘xh5 11 ♗h6 e5 12 ♘ge2! ♖e8?! (12...♗xh6 is also insufficient in view of 13 ♕xh6 ♕f6 14 dxe5! ♕xe5 15 g4 ♘hf6 16 ♘d4!, but 12...b4!?, distracting the white knight from the centre, deserves attention) 13 g4 ♘hf6 14 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 15 ♕h6+ ♔g8, Zo.Varga-Golubev, Romanian Superliga (Herculane) 1996. Here White can obtain a great advantage by 16 dxe5! ♘xe5 (16...dxe5 loses to 17 g5 ♘h5 18 ♘g3! ♘xg3 19 ♖xd7!) 17 c5 ♘xf3 18 ♖xd6 ♕e7 19 ♘f4! with the threat of 20 ♘fd5. This game still puzzles me a bit because White has virtually never repeated 8 0-0-0 since then.

7 ♘ge2 a6

In comparison with 6 ♗e3, here the d4-square is more vulnerable, but there is no way for Black to use this factor as of now: 7...e5?! 8 d5 ♘d4 9 ♘xd4 exd4 10 ♕xd4! with a healthy extra pawn because 10...♘xe4? fails to 11 ♕xg7+! ♔xg7 12 ♗xd8 ♘xc3 13 ♗xc7.

Or 7...♖e8 8 ♕d2 (8 d5!?) 8...e5 9 d5 ♘d4 10 0-0-0 (10 ♗e3!?) 10...c5 11 dxc6 bxc6 12 ♘xd4 exd4 13 ♕xd4 ♘xe4 14 ♗xd8! ♗xd4 15 ♘xe4 ♗e3+ 16 ♔c2 ♖xd8 and after the capture by either rook or knight on d6, White can play for a win without any risk of losing, Seirawan-Van der Wiel, Granda Mana 1984.

8 ♕d2 ♖b8 *(D)*

8...♗d7 is also interesting. What I disliked there, analysing the line some 10 years ago, is 9 h4 h5 10 0-0-0 b5 11 ♘d5 bxc4 12 g4! hxg4 13 h5 (Sadler-Raisa, Gausdal 1994) and after 13...♘xh5?! 14 ♘ef4! White's attack is too strong. But after 13...♘h7! (Nunn), the position is rather unclear.

9 ♖c1

Although White's choice is certainly not narrow, most strong players (if they wish to retain the independent value of ♗g5) choose between this move and 9 d5!?, which I met in three serious games: 9...♘e5 (a typical alternative is 9...♘a5!? followed by 10...c5) 10 ♘d4 (the line 10 ♘g3 c6 11 ♗e2 b5! 12 cxb5 cxd5, as in Polugaevsky-Nunn, Plovdiv Echt 1983, seems to give Black enough counterplay) 10...c5 (after 10...c6?! 11 f4, 11...♘ed7? 12 dxc6 ♘c5 is refuted by 13 ♗xf6! ♗xf6 14 ♘d5! ♘xe4 15 ♕e2!) 11 ♘c2 ♘h5!? (11...b5 12 cxb5 axb5?! 13 ♗xb5 ♖xb5 14 ♘xb5 ♘c4 15 ♕e2! ♕a5+ 16 ♔f2 was much better for White in Dreev-Smirin, Biel IZ 1993 because 16...♕xb5 17 b3! does not allow Black to regain the sacrificed material; two other options are 11...♘e8!? and 11...♕a5) 12 ♗e2 (after 12 f4 h6 13 ♗h4 ♘xf4! 14 ♕xf4 g5 15 ♗xg5 hxg5 16 ♕xg5 Black certainly had good compensation for the pawn in Shishkin-Golubev, Kiev 1997: maybe I could then have played 16...f5!? straight away) 12...f5 (12...b5!? 13 cxb5 axb5 14 ♘xb5 and here 14...f5 15 exf5 gxf5 gives Black compensation in Vogt's opinion) and now:

a) 13 f4 ♘f7 14 ♗h4 fxe4 15 ♗xh5 gxh5 16 0-0 ♘h6 17 ♘e3 ♗f5 18 a4 ♗g6 led to a position with mutual chances in Gruenenwald-Golubev, Swiss open Ch (Scuol) 2001.

b) 13 exf5 ♗xf5!? (13...gxf5 14 f4 ♘g4 15 0-0 was Summermatter-Nijboer, Lucerne 1989, and here Hazai suggests 15...b5!? – it is hard to judge whether Black has enough resources in the sharp lines after 16 cxb5 axb5 17 ♘xb5 ♘hf6 18 ♗h4!? ♘e4 19 ♕e1 ♗xb2 20 ♖b1 ♗f6 21 ♗xg4, etc.) 14 0-0! (with the principal idea of 15 ♘e3 followed by 16 f4) 14...h6 15 ♗e3 (15 ♗xh6!? ♗xh6 16 ♕xh6 ♗xc2 seems to be double-edged) 15...g5 16 g4! ♗xc2 17 gxh5! and here 17...♗h7!? (instead of 17...♗f5 18 f4! gxf4 19 ♗xf4 ♕d7 20 ♗xh6 ♗xh6 21

♕xh6 ♖f6 22 ♕e3 ♔h8 23 ♔h1 ♖bf8 24 ♖f4! ♗h7 25 ♖af1 ♖xf4 26 ♖xf4 with an advantage for White, Milanović-Golubev, Novi Bečej open 1997) 18 f4 gxf4 19 ♗xf4 b5 20 cxb5 axb5 probably allows Black to develop sufficient counterplay.

9 h4 h5 can often transpose to 6 ♗e3 lines in cases where White continues with ♗h6. We saw this in Game 39 (Khomiakov-Golubev), and another example is 10 ♘d5 (10 ♘c1 e5 11 d5 ♘d4 12 ♘b3 c5 13 dxc6 bxc6 14 ♘xd4 exd4 15 ♕xd4 ♗e6!? 16 0-0-0 ♕a5! with the idea 17 ♗xf6 c5) 10...♘h7 11 ♗h6, which was the actual move-order of the game Piket-Nijboer, Groningen 1992 (see note 'b2' to White's 9th move in Game 38).

We now return to 9 ♖c1 *(D)*:

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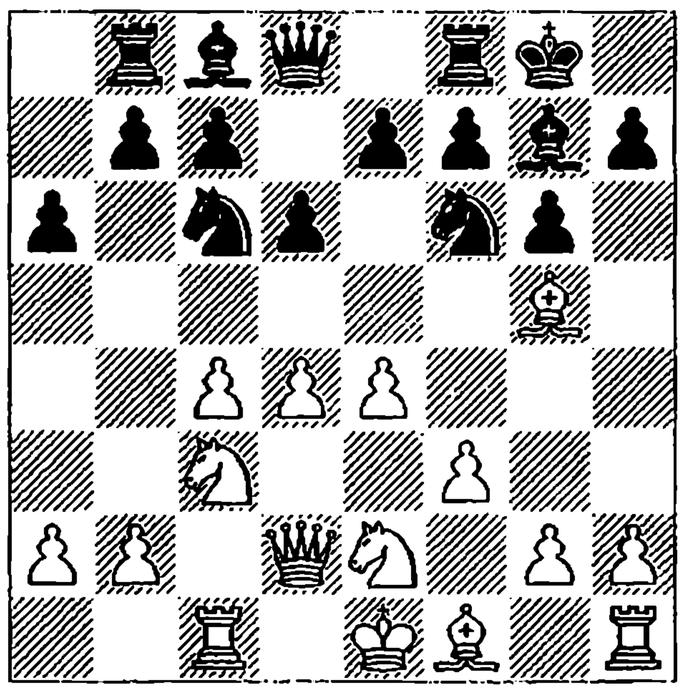

9...♗d7

9...♖e8!? may make sense in the case of 10 b3 e5 (10...♗d7?! 11 d5! ♘a5 12 c5) 11 d5 ♘d4 12 ♘xd4 exd4 13 ♘e2 (13 ♕xd4 ♘xe4 14 ♕xg7+ ♔xg7 15 ♗xd8 ♘xc3+ =) 13...h6! with the idea 14 ♗h4 c5 15 dxc6 bxc6 16 ♘xd4 ♘xe4, but the immediate 10 d5! is stronger.

10 b3!

More precise than 10 d5, when 10...♘e5 11 b3 b5 transposes to the main game (11...♘h5 12 ♘g3 f5 13 ♘xh5 gxh5 14 ♗e2 ♘g6 15 exf5 ♗xf5 16 0-0 ♕d7 17 ♘e4 h4 18 ♗d3 e5 19 g4! was better for White in Dreev-Mukhutdinov, St Petersburg (Chigorin mem) 1993), while 10...♘a5! 11 b3 c5 is the important additional option for Black, which White avoids by 10 b3.

10...b5

Facing an unpleasant novelty, I started to spend a lot of time on my moves. It is hard to propose anything more sensible than 10...b5, but, frankly, I even considered 10...♗c8?! with the idea of avoiding my opponent's preparation!

11 d5! *(D)*

More flexible than 11 cxb5 axb5 12 d5: White can decide whether he should take on b5 on the next move.

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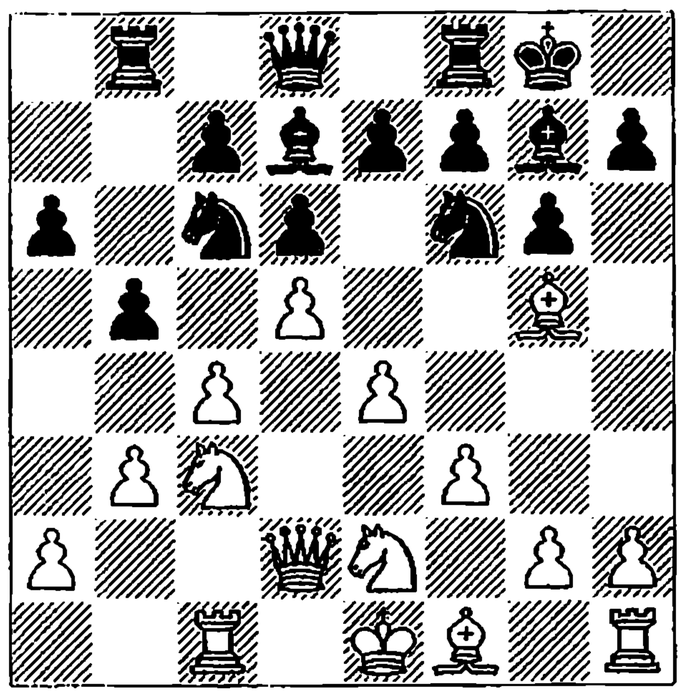

11...♘e5

11...♘a7!? looks just ugly. Even if it is to some extent playable (12 ♘g3 c6 13 dxc6 ♗xc6, Begovac-Ye Jiangchuan, Berne open 1995) it is hard to recommend such a retreat to anyone.

11...♘a5 does not solve Black's problems. Dydyshko-A.Fedorov, Minsk 1996 continued 12 cxb5! axb5 13 ♘d4 ♕e8 (13...b4 14 ♘cb5!) 14 ♘cxb5 ♗xb5 15 ♕xa5 ♗xf1 16 ♖xf1 (in order to avoid 16 ♔xf1 ♘xe4 17 fxe4 ♗xd4 18 ♗h6 f5!) 16...e6!? and after 17 dxe6 c5! 18 e7 ♕xc7 19 ♘c6 ♕e8 20 ♘xb8 ♘xe4!! 21 fxe4 ♕xe4+ 22 ♔f2 ♗d4+ 23 ♔g3 h5 24 ♗f4 g5 25 h3 gxf4+ 26 ♔h2 ♖xb8 Black obtained sufficient compensation for the exchange. Unfortunately, 17 ♘c6! ♖a8 18 ♕xc7 destroys the miracle and gives White a clear advantage as far as I can see.

12 f4!?

A principled decision. White weakens himself a bit and plays against the black knight, which will feel uncomfortable on g4. The alternative 12 cxb5 axb5 13 ♘d4 ♕e8 (13...b4?! 14 ♘cb5!, Nakamura-Golubev, Canarias en Red blitz 2004) is still awaiting a serious test. After 14 f4!? b4 (14...c5 15 ♘dxb5 ♘eg4 16 h3!? h6 17 ♗h4 ♗xb5 18 ♗xb5 ♖xb5 19 hxg4 ♖b4 20 ♕e2 and it is not easy for Black to prove that he has compensation for the pawn) 15 fxe5 bxc3 16 ♕e3 dxe5 Black is structurally seriously worse, but, as the opponent's king is still in the centre, he should have counterchances.

12...♘eg4 13 ♘g3

Protecting the e4-pawn and creating the threat of 14 h3. The immediate 13 h3 is answered by 13...h6 14 ♗h4 b4!. White could also try to stop ...b4 by playing b4 himself: 13 b4!? a5! 14 a3 axb4 15 axb4 bxc4 16 h3 h6 17 ♗h4 g5 18 fxg5 hxg5 19 ♗xg5 ♘e5 or 13 cxb5!? axb5 14 b4 c5 15 dxc6 ♕b6! 16 ♕d4! ♗xc6! 17 e5 dxe5 18 fxe5 ♕xd4 19 ♘xd4 ♘xe5 with a playable position for Black in both cases.

13...h6 14 ♗h4 *(D)*

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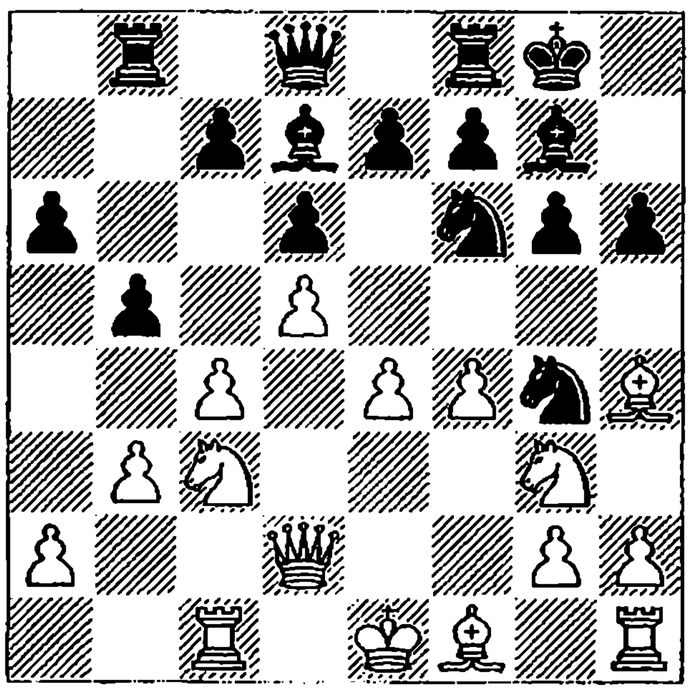

14...♘h7?!

An interesting idea, which did not occur to me during the game, was 14...b4!? 15 ♘d1 (or 15 ♘ce2 e5! 16 dxe6 fxe6 17 h3 g5 18 fxg5 hxg5 19 ♗xg5 and now Black has 19...♘f2!) 15...e5! 16 dxe6 fxe6 17 h3 g5! 18 fxg5 ♘h7 19 ♘h5 hxg5 20 hxg4 gxh4 21 ♘xg7 ♔xg7 and things do not seem to be bad for Black.

15 h3?!

In turn, White responds inaccurately. 15 ♗e2! (Dreev) is correct, with a quite clear advantage. At least, when I analysed this position, I did not like it for Black at all.

15...♘gf6 16 ♗d3 e5!

Thanks to this resource, Black now obtains a decent game.

17 fxe5

Or 17 dxe6 fxe6 (17...♗xe6 18 cxb5 axb5 19 ♘xb5 c5! was tested in Muir-A.Kuzmin, Gibraltar Masters 2004; Black won very nicely after 20 0-0 ♘xe4 21 ♘xe4 ♕xh4 22 ♘exd6 ♖fd8 23 ♕e2 ♗xh3 24 ♗xg6 ♖xd6 25 ♗xf7+ ♔h8 26 ♘xd6 ♗d4+ 27 ♖f2 ♗g4 28 ♕c2 ♕f6 29 ♗g6 ♕xd6 30 ♗xh7 ♕xf4 31 ♖cf1 ♖f8 32 ♗d3 h5 33 a3 h4 34 ♕b2 ♖f6 35 b4 ♕g3 36 ♕d2 ♗f3 37 ♔h1 ♕h3+ 0-1, but White's play certainly can be improved) 18 e5 dxe5 19 fxe5 g5 20 exf6 ♘xf6 21 ♗xg5 hxg5 22 ♕xg5 ♗c6 23 ♖d1 ♘d7! 24 ♘ce4 ♘e5 with full compensation for the pawn.

17...dxe5 18 ♘ge2 c6!

Not 18...♘xe4?? 19 ♗xd8 ♘xd2 20 ♗xc7.

19 ♗f2!

After 19 0-0?!, 19...b4 20 ♘a4 ♘xe4! already works.

19...♘h5!? 20 ♗c5!? *(D)*

White wishes to avoid 20 0-0 f5.

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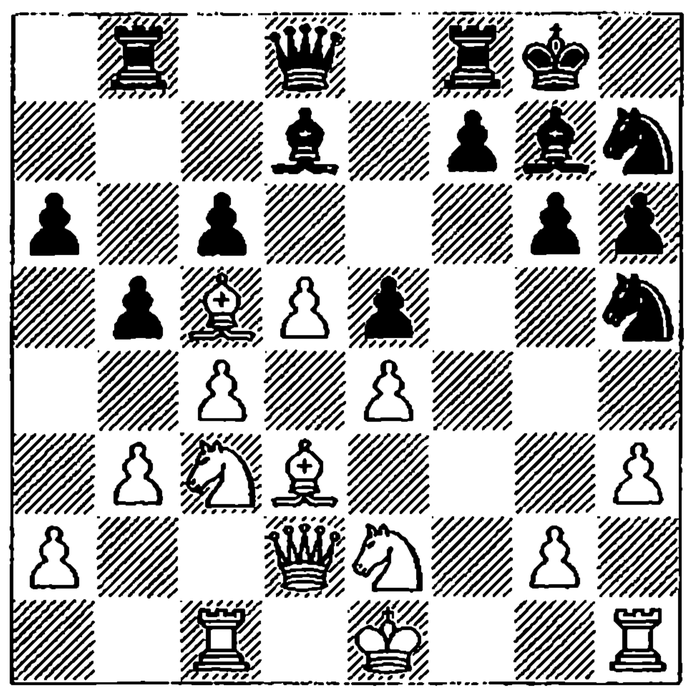

20...♖e8

The brave exchange sacrifice 20...♕h4+!? 21 g3 ♕d8! 22 ♗xf8 ♗xf8 was possibly a better choice.

21 0-0 ♘g5 22 ♗e3 ♖f8 23 dxc6

23 ♖f2!? – Dreev.

23...♗xc6 24 ♘d5 bxc4 25 bxc4 ♘e6 26 g3

Grabbing the pawn by 26 ♗xh6 ♗xh6 27 ♕xh6 would lead to unclear consequences after 27...♗xd5 28 exd5 ♘ef4.

26...♘d4 27 ♔h2 ♔h7 28 ♖f2

At this moment I was already in serious time-trouble and quickly spoiled a still playable position.

28...a5?! 29 ♖cf1 ♖b7 30 ♕c3 ♕b8?

Just blundering the pawn.

31 ♕xa5 ♖b2 32 ♗c1 ♖b7 33 ♗a3 ♖a7 34 ♕c3 ♖c8 35 ♖xf7 ♗xd5 36 exd5 ♘b5 37 ♗xg6+ ♔h8 38 ♕f3 ♘xg3 39 ♘xg3 ♖xa3 40 ♗d3 1-0

11 The Fianchetto Variation

The King's Indian with g3 and ♗g2 is not a simple topic to classify: there exist multiple move-orders on the initial moves. We may say that (with the exception of rare set-ups with e3 and ♘ge2) all important lines of the Fianchetto Variation begin from the position which arises after...

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘f3 ♗g7 4 g3 0-0 5 ♗g2 d6 *(D)*

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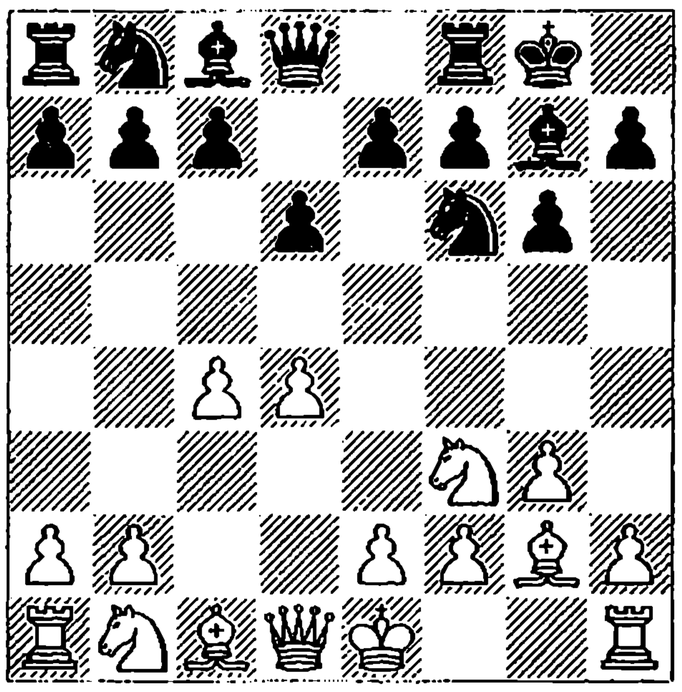

...and now either 6 ♘c3 or (slightly more popular) 6 0-0, which in most cases lead to the same lines.

It is important to note that the Fianchetto Variation differs significantly from 'normal' King's Indian lines, which begin from 1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 (where 5 g3, as we already saw, normally does not give White the possibility to reach the desired positions of the Fianchetto).The key difference is that when he wishes to play the Fianchetto, White delays e4, and thus nothing prevents Black from transposing to the Fianchetto Grünfeld (by ...d5, or sometimes by ...c6 and ...d5). In fact, a number of players react to an early g3 in exactly this way. Besides, Black can also meet the early g3 by ...c5, in the spirit of the Benoni.

So, before we return to the position in the above diagram (which shows Black's pure King's Indian set-up against g3), we should make the observation that Black can create a repertoire combining a King's Indian set-up in the case of 1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 with other plans in cases where White delays e4.

Still, in my practice I have always preferred to meet g3 in a King's Indian manner (in the case of the 1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 d6 move order, which I often use, there is virtually no choice). Moreover, while after either 6 ♘c3 or 6 0-0 Black has four main plans (6...♘bd7, 6...♕c7, 6...c5 and 6...c6), in the majority of games I have opted for lines with 6...♘bd7. Therefore, I have almost nothing to say about the other lines (with the exception of 6...c6 and 7...♕a5) and will concentrate on the system involving ...♘bd7, which Kasparov, who used it quite often, called "the most aggressive" of Black's options. Why so?, one may ask. It is quite obvious that 6...♘bd7 creates less direct pressure on White's centre than either 6...c5 or 6...♕c7. Let's go a bit further.

6 0-0 ♘bd7 7 ♘c3

White's major sideline 7 ♕c2 e5 8 ♖d1 does not essentially change the nature of the struggle.

7...e5 8 e4 *(D)*

A popular alternative is 8 h3, usually anyway followed by 9 e4.

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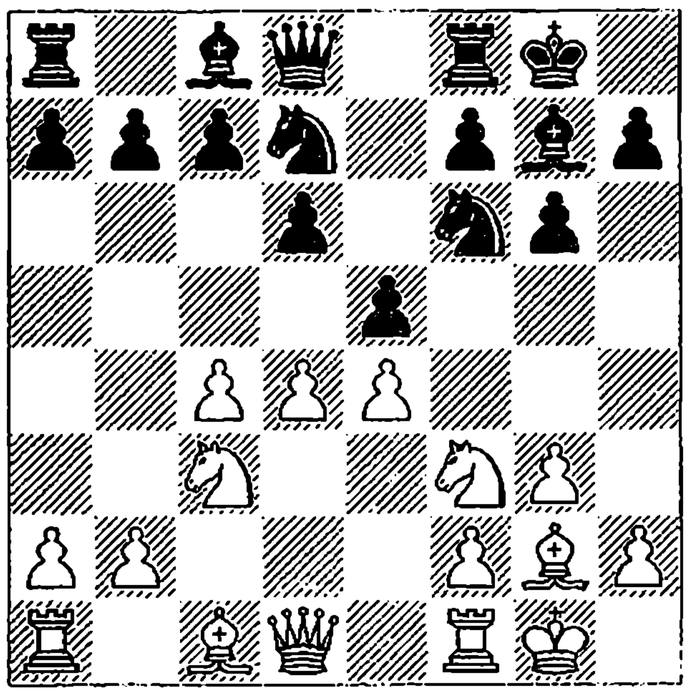


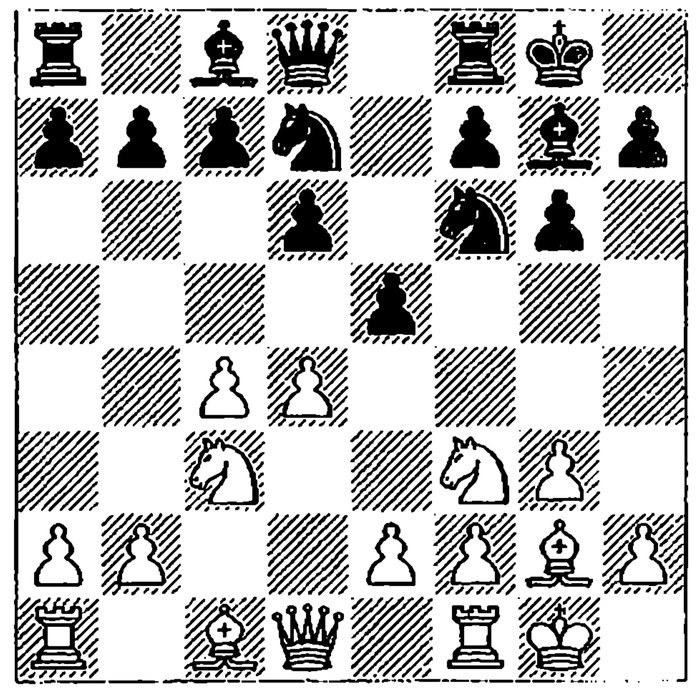
We see that Black has allowed White to build a solid pawn-centre. But, starting from now, he begins to fight against this centre using all kinds of methods and tricks. In various lines, either

e4, d4 or c4 comes under attack. Thus, the 'passive' d7-knight, after the exchange on d4, can jump either to c5 or e5 (b6), attacking the e4- and c4-pawns respectively. Practice has shown that White needs both good preparation and an excellent feeling of the danger he must deal with this line. Black's most popular move is the flexible 8...c6, which I have used often, but at some point almost totally abandoned, disliking the character of the struggle in the specific line 9 h3 ♕b6 10 c5!? dxc5 11 dxe5 ♘e8 12 e6!?, where White sacrifices a pawn for the initiative. Nevertheless, I still consider 8...c6 to be the main move, and will devote attention to it. The modern 8...a6!? will not be covered below, as I have practically never used it, but I should at least mention the existence of this interesting line.

The majority of the material I offer involves the second most popular (after 8...c6) and the most provocative continuation 8...exd4!? 9 ♘xd4 ♖e8, giving up the centre immediately. After the main move 10 h3 (preparing ♗e3) I have often opted for Gallagher's 10...a6!? and sometimes the classical 10...♘c5. In short, the character of the struggle can be described as follows: White is trying to complete his development (ideally by ♖e1, ♗e3, ♕c2 and ♖ad1), creating serious strategic pressure on Black. Meanwhile, Black is trying to create various obstacles in White's path to consolidation. On the whole, White's chances are somewhat better, but, despite several painful losses (specifically, Timoshenko-Golubev and Borovikov-Golubev in the Gallagher Variation) I have enjoyed very decent results from the position after 8...exd4, and consider the line still to be attractive enough for the ambitious player.

Game 44
Gufeld – Golubev
Alushta open 1993

1 g3 e5 2 ♗g2 d6 3 c4 ♘f6 4 ♘c3 g6 5 ♘f3 ♗g7 6 0-0 0-0 7 d4 ♘bd7 *(D)*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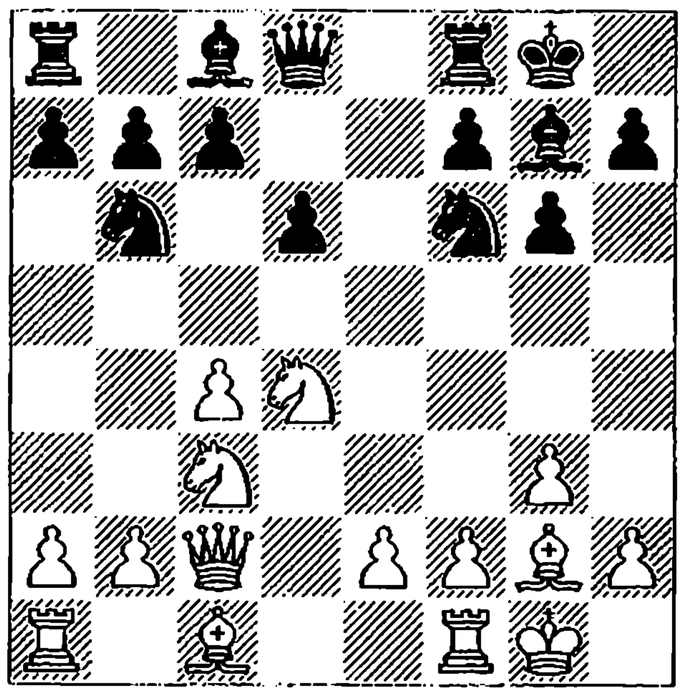
8 ♕c2

The main move 8 e4 (and the principal alternative to it, 8 h3) will be discussed later. 8 ♕c2 is used fairly often, but the general view is that another version of this idea, where White delays ♘c3, and plays ♕c2 in conjunction with an early ♖d1, is more dangerous for Black -- see Game 45, Malaniuk-Golubev.

After 8 d5?! Black has an easy game. Nemet-Golubev, Swiss open Ch (Scuol) 2001 continued 8...a5!? (8...♘c5) 9 e4 ♘c5 10 ♘e1 ♘fd7 11 ♘d3 ♘xd3 12 ♕xd3 f5 13 f3 (this is too passive; 13 exf5 is better) 13...f4 14 ♗d2 ♘c5 15 ♕c2 ♗d7 16 b3 h5 17 ♖ab1 ♗f6 18 a3?! a4 19 bxa4 b6 20 ♘b5 fxg3 21 hxg3 h4 22 gxh4 ♗xh4 and Black had a strategically winning position.

8 b3 ♖e8 9 e3 c6 is also fully playable for Black. Now 10 ♗b2 (this position first occurred in A.Schwarz-L.Paulsen in 1880!) allows 10...e4 11 ♘d2 d5 12 f3 exf3 13 ♕xf3 dxc4 14 bxc4 (Black has nothing to fear after 14 ♘xc4 ♘b6 15 ♘e5 ♗e6 as in Zak-Simagin, USSR 1952 and other games) 14...♘c5! 15 ♘d5 ♘g4!! 16 ♕xf7+ (16 h3 ♘h6 17 ♗a3 ♘a4! 18 ♘f6+ ♗xf6 19 ♕xf6 ♕xf6 20 ♖xf6 ♘f5 Zak) 16...♔h8 17 h3 (other moves seem to favour Black: 17 ♘f4? {Kochyev-V.Fedorov, Leningrad Ch sf 1972} 17...♘a4!; 17 ♘c7? ♖e7 18 ♕xg7+ ♖xg7 19 dxc5 ♗f5 20 ♖xf5 ♕xd2!; 17 dxc5? ♗xb2 18 ♘c7 ♖c7 19 ♕f8+ ♕xf8 20 ♖xf8+ ♔g7 21 ♘xa8 ♔xf8 – Zak; or 17 ♗a3 cxd5 18 ♗xc5 ♘xe3 19 ♗xd5 ♘xf1! 20 ♖xf1 b6! 21 ♗xa8 bxc5, Danailov-Kolev, Bad Ragaz open 1989) 17...♗e6! (stronger than 17...♘xe3 18 ♕xg7+! ♔xg7 19 dxc5+ ♔h6 20 ♖f7! ♘f5 21 ♗f6) 18 ♕xg7+ (not good for White is 18 ♕c7? cxd5 19 ♕xd8 ♖axd8 20 hxg4 dxc4 or 18 ♕f3 ♗xd5!? 19 ♕xg4 ♗xg2 20 ♔xg2 ♖xe3! 21 ♖f7 ♘a4 22 ♖xg7!? ♔xg7 23 d5+ ♘xb2 24 ♕d4+ ♕f6 25 ♕xe3 ♘xc4 26 ♘xc4 ♕xa1 27 ♕e7+ ♔g8! 28 ♕e6+ ♔h8 29 ♘e5 ♕xa2+ and Black wins – Zak) 18...♔xg7 19 dxc5+ ♔g8 20 hxg4 cxd5 and White doesn't really have full compensation for the queen.

8...exd4 9 ♘xd4 ♘b6! *(D)*



W

This rather atypical operation works well in this particular line.

10 ♖d1

The natural 10 b3?! gives Black very good chances after 10...c5! 11 ♘db5 a6 12 ♘a3 ♗f5!.

10 ♕d3!? is of interest:

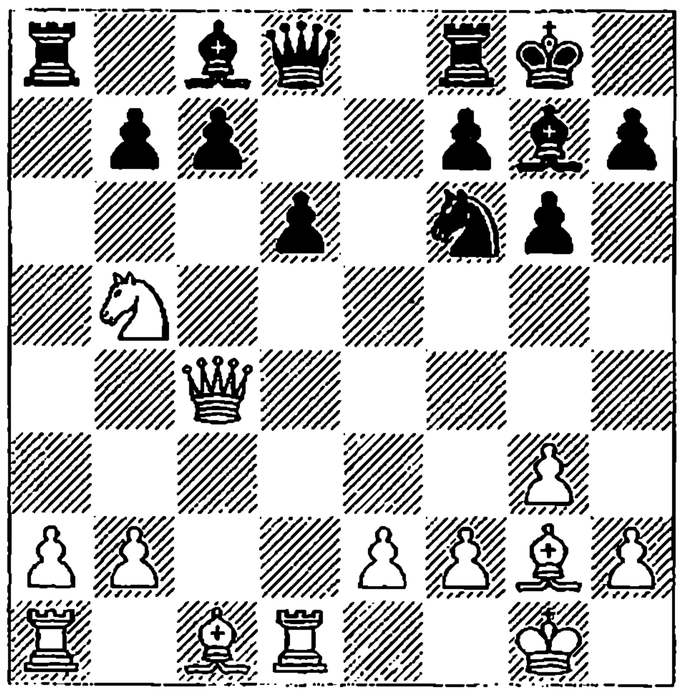
a) The stem game Alekhine-Réti, Bad Pistyan 1922 continued 10...d5 11 cxd5 ♘fxd5 12 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 13 ♖d1 c6 14 e4 ♘b4 15 ♕c4 and now 15...♕e7!? was possible, with a slightly passive but solid position for Black.

b) 10...♘fd7 11 b3 and here 11...♘c5!? followed by ...a5 was suggested by Geller as equalizing (11...♕f6 12 e3 c5 13 ♘e4! ♕e7 14 ♘c2 ♗xa1 15 ♘xa1 and White has excellent compensation for the exchange, Birnboim-Pasman, Beersheba 1978; 11...a5 12 ♗b2 ♘e5 13 ♕d1! was Skotorenko-Spassky, USSR 1954, where Black could try 13...a4!?).

10...♘xc4 11 ♘cb5 a6

11...d5 12 b3 c5 is risky for Black.

12 ♕xc4 axb5 13 ♘xb5 *(D)*



B

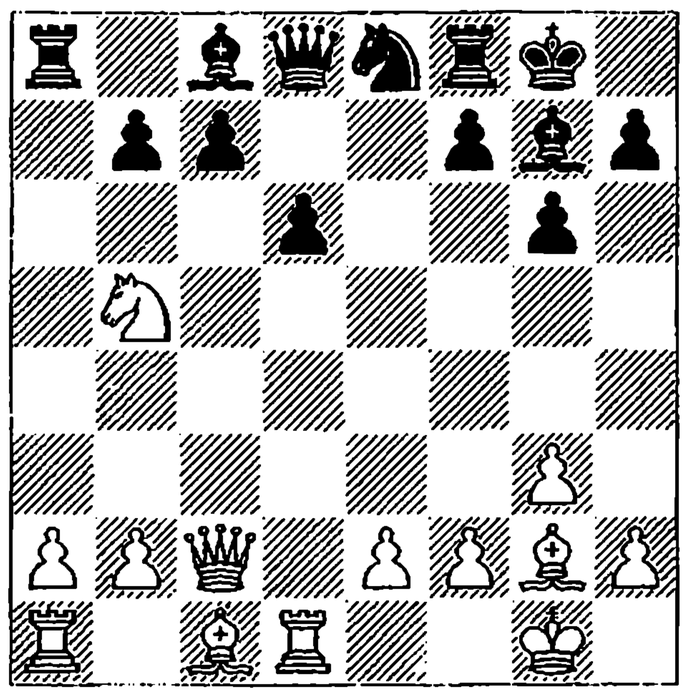
This position has been tested dozens of times in practice. In my view, the chances are equal.

13...♘e8

The alternative is 13...♗d7. After 14 ♗g5 h6 15 ♗f4 (Hübner-Minić, Palma de Mallorca IZ 1970), 15...d5!? deserves attention: 16 ♗xd5 c6 17 ♗xf7+ ♖xf7 18 ♘d6 ♕c7 19 ♕xf7+ ♕xf7 20 ♘xf7 ♔xf7 21 ♗e5 ♗e6.

14 ♕c2! *(D)*

Perhaps this is stronger than 14 ♘c3 c6, which occurred a few months later in the fighting game T.Southam-Golubev, Biel open 1993. There followed 15 e4 ♗g4! 16 f3?! ♗e6 17 ♕b4 (17 ♕e2 b5!) 17...b5 18 ♗e3 ♕b8 (18...♗c4! and Black is better) 19 e5! (complicating matters) 19...dxe5 20 f4 (20 ♗c5 f5!) 20...exf4 21 gxf4 ♕c8 22 ♗c5 ♗c4 23 ♘e4 (23 b3 ♗e6!?) 23...f5 24 ♘g5 ♘f6 25 b3!? ♗d5 26 ♗xf8 ♗xf8 27 ♕d4 ♗g7 28 ♖ac1 ♘e4 (a good alternative was 28...♗xg2 29 ♔xg2 h6) 29 ♕d3 ♕e8 30 ♖e1 ♖xa2 31 ♘xe4 ♖xg2+ 32 ♔xg2 ♗xe4+? (32...fxe4! with full compensation for two exchanges) 33 ♖xe4! fxe4 34 ♕d6 (34 ♖e1!?) 34...♕c8 35 ♖xc6? (time-trouble! After 35 ♔g3! Black must fight for a draw by 35...♗f8!) 35...♕g4+ 36 ♔f2 ♕f3+ ½-½.



B

14...♗d7

Also playable is 14...♗f5!? 15 e4 ♗g4, as in Jongsma-Kozma, Varna U-26 Wch 1958, or 14...♕e7!? 15 ♗f4 g5 16 ♗e3 (16 ♘xc7 ♕xc7 17 ♕xc7 ♘xc7 18 ♗xd6 ♘e6) 16...c6. But not 14...c6?! 15 ♘xd6! ♘xd6 16 ♗f4 ♕f6 17 ♗xd6 ♖d8 18 ♗b4! ♗f5 19 e4!, when White keeps his extra pawn: 19...♖xd1+ 20 ♖xd1 ♗g4 21 ♖d2 (or 21 f3 ♗xf3 22 ♖d6!) with the idea 21...♖xa2? 22 h3 ♗e6 23 e5! ♕g5 24 h4.

15 ♘c3 c6

15...♗c6!? 16 e4 f5 possibly deserved attention, but I decided to prepare ...b5.

16 e4 b5

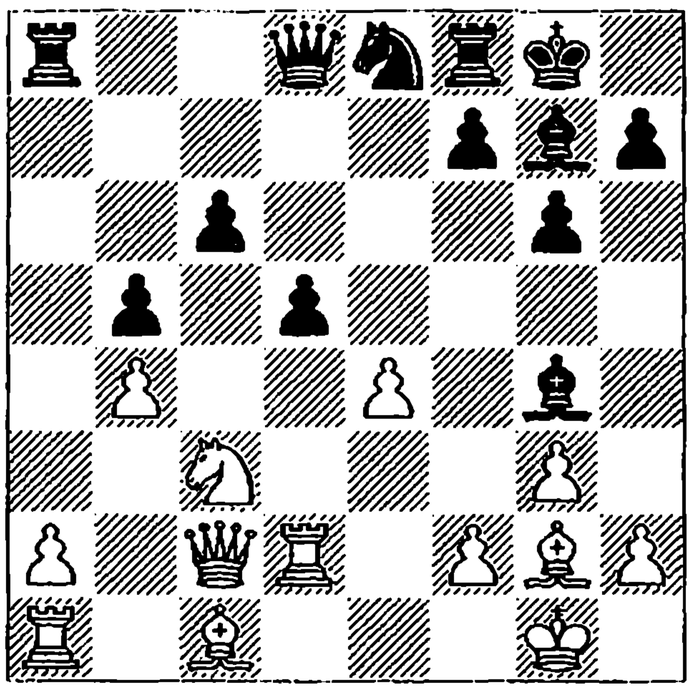
Other ideas are 16...♗g4!? and 16...f5 (17 ♗f4 ♕e7 18 ♖e1 is better for White according to Gufeld, but there is possibly nothing special after 18...♕f7!? 19 e5 dxe5 20 ♗xe5 ♘f6).

17 b4!

Stopping ...b4 and planning 18 ♗b2. Now Black has a number of playable quiet continuations, but I was attracted by the following idea:

17...♗g4 18 ♖d2 d5?! *(D)*

W



This radically solves the problem of my passive knight on e8 – it is now ready to go to c4! Now Black's pieces will develop a lot of activity and some crazy complications begin. But objectively, Black should not really obtain full compensation for the two pawns which he sacrifices. The situation before this last-round game (only a win could have brought me some prize money) of course influenced my decision.

19 exd5! ♘d6

"Courage is always worth respect", commented Eduard Gufeld in his notes to the game.

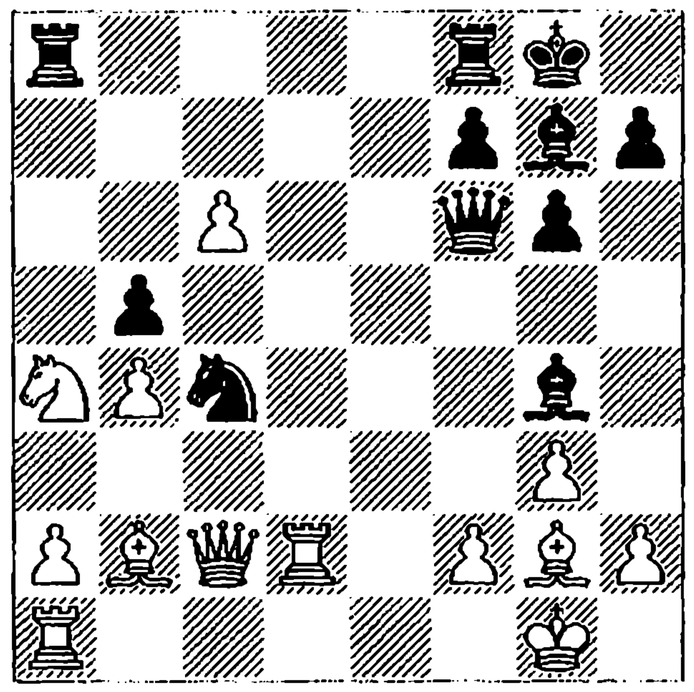
After Black's 19th, the events developed rather logically and although White had to make several forced moves, he obtained the advantage without really major problems. Perhaps I could have forced him to make more difficult decisions by 19...♗f5!? 20 ♕b3 ♘d6 21 dxc6 ♕f6 (21...♗e6?! 22 ♗d5) 22 ♖xd6!? (22 ♗b2 ♘c4 23 ♘d5 ♘xd2 24 ♘xf6+ ♗xf6 25 ♕e3 ♗xb2 looks very unclear) 22...♕xc3 23 ♕xc3 ♗xc3 24 g4!! (the point) 24...♗e6! 25 ♖xe6! (stronger than 25 ♖b1 ♗xa2) 25...fxe6 26 ♖b1 ♖xa2 (26...♗d4 27 ♗e3 ♗xe3 28 fxe3 ♖xa2 29 ♖c1 ♖a7 30 ♗f1 ♖b8 31 ♖c5 is not pleasant for Black) and after 27 ♗e3! ♖c8 Black is fighting for a draw. After 19...c5, 20 bxc5!? is an interesting piece sacrifice (White could also try to prove an advantage in lines like 20 ♗b2 ♗f5 21 ♕c1!? cxb4 22 ♘xb5 ♖c8 23 ♕e1 ♗c3 24 ♗xc3 bxc3 25 ♖e2 ♗d3 26 ♘a7!): 20...b4 21 ♗b2 bxc3 22 ♗xc3 and the white pawns are menacing.

20 dxc6 ♕f6 21 ♗b2!

Stronger than 21 ♖b1 ♗f5 (or 21...♘c4 22 ♘e4!?) 22 ♘e4, when 22...♘xe4?! 23 ♗xe4 ♗xe4 24 ♕xe4 ♖fe8 25 ♕d5! leaves Black with problems. For example, 25...♖e5 (or 25...♖ad8 26 ♕xb5 ♖e1+ 27 ♔g2 ♖xd2 28 ♗xd2 ♖xb1 29 c7, winning) 26 ♕d6 ♖e6 27 ♕c5 with the idea 27...♕f3 28 ♗b2 ♖ae8 29 ♖f1 ♖e1 30 ♕xb5 ♗xb2 31 ♖xb2 ♖8e2 32 ♕xe2! ♖xe2 33 c7 ♖e8 34 ♖d2 ♕a8 35 ♖fd1 ♖c8 36 ♖d8+ ♔g7 37 b5 and Black is lost. But 22...♕e6 23 ♖e2 ♖fe8 24 f3 ♖ec8!? seems to give Black full compensation.

21...♘c4 22 ♘a4! *(D)*

B



The best move.

22...♘xb2 23 ♘xb2 ♗f5

23...♖ad8 24 ♖xd8 ♖xd8 is parried by 25 ♖b1 ♗f5 26 ♗e4.

24 ♕b3! ♕c3! 25 ♖ad1! ♕xb3

25...♖a3!? does not solve Black's problems either: 26 ♕xc3 (or 26 ♕d5 ♗g4 27 ♘d3) 26...♗xc3 27 ♖d5!? ♗xb2 28 ♖xb5 and White's connected passed pawns more than compensate for Black's extra bishop.

26 axb3 ♗c3 27 ♖e2 ♖a2

27...♗g4!? 28 f3 ♗e6 would be a good practical try in mutual time-trouble, but objectively White is better after 29 ♖xe6!? fxe6 30 ♘d3 (Gufeld).

28 ♘a4!

The second, and now strictly forced, knight jump to the same place.

28...bxa4

28...♖xe2? 29 ♘xc3 ♖b2 30 ♗d5 looks hopeless for Black.

29 ♖xa2 axb3 30 ♖a3 ♗c2 31 ♖xb3!

Eliminating Black's last trump.

31...♗xb3 32 ♖d3 ♗xb4 33 ♖xb3

White has an extra pawn and obvious winning chances. Probably it would be not easy for him to achieve a victory against the strongest defence (and it is hard to be absolutely sure if it is achievable at all), but Black goes astray immediately.

33...♗d6?

33...♗a5! is correct, with the idea 34 ♖b5 ♗c7 35 ♖b7 ♖c8 36 ♗h3 f5 37 ♗f1 ♗d6! 38 ♗c4+ ♔h8 39 ♗d5 ♖c7.

34 ♖b7! ♖c8 35 ♖d7! ♗e5 36 f4!

Now White wins a second pawn.

36...♗c7 37 ♗d5 ♗b6+ 38 ♔f1 ♖c7 39 ♗xf7+ ♔f8 40 ♖xc7 ♗xc7 41 ♗d5 h6 42 h4 g5 43 fxg5 hxg5 44 hxg5 ♗xg3 45 g6 1-0

The white pawns are far enough from each other that the win is easy, so Black resigned.

1993 was, overall, a very successful year for me, during which I established myself as a professional player. My performance in the Alushta Open was one of the worst in that year, but I am rather glad that I managed to meet such a colourful player as Gufeld over the board. He tried to offer me some apples during our game and immediately after the game ended, he started to tell everybody that he had created his new 'Gioconda'. Well, beauty is a subjective matter, but White certainly played chess of a very high quality.

Game 45
Malaniuk – Golubev
Ukrainian open Ch (Yalta) 1996

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3

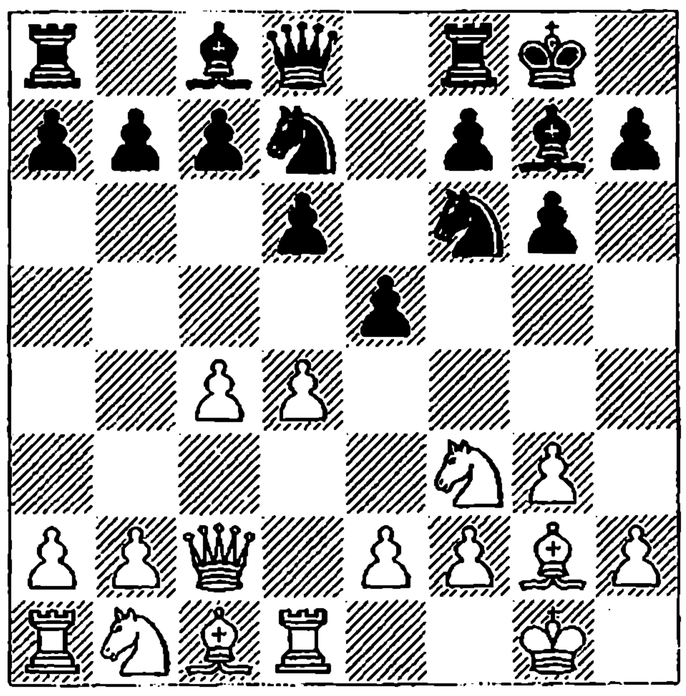
The previous time I had faced him, Vladimir Malaniuk, one of the strongest Ukrainian players in the 1990s, used the innocuous-looking set-up with e3 and ♘ge2: 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 g3 0-0 5 ♗g2 d6 6 e3 ♘bd7 7 ♘ge2 e5 8 0-0 ♖e8 9 b3 c6 10 ♗a3!? exd4 (10...♘f8!? is a playable alternative) 11 ♘xd4 ♘c5 12 ♕c2 ♕e7 (12...♘g4?! 13 h3 ♘xe3? is an instructive error: 14 fxe3 ♖xe3 15 ♖ad1 ♖xg3 16 ♕f2 ♖xc3 17 ♗b2! ♖xh3 18 ♕xf7+ ♔h8 19 ♘e6 1-0 *Chess Tiger*-Golubev, ICC blitz 2003; the best move is probably 12...a5!; then, curiously, 13 ♗b2, which is of course unnecessary, transposes to the game Golubev-Prang, Senden open 1994, but with reversed colours; play continued 13...a4!? 14 ♖ab1 axb3 15 axb3 ♘g4!? 16 ♖a1 ♖xa1 17 ♖xa1? and here I saw the correct idea 17...♗xd4! 18 exd4 ♗f5 but was too lazy to calculate the lines accurately; after 19 ♕d1 both 19...♘d3 20 ♕d2 ♕b6! and 19...♘xf2 20 ♔xf2 ♘d3+ 21 ♔g1 ♘xb2 22 ♕d2 ♘d3 23 g4 ♕f6 24 gxf5 ♕xd4+ 25 ♔f1 ♖e5! lead to an advantage for Black – or rather White in the game in question!) 13 ♖fe1 h5 14 h3 ♘fe4 (I find it hard to say why I refused to play the typical move 14...a5) 15 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 16 ♖ad1 ♕e5?! (16...♘c5 17 b4 ♘e4 was almost forced) 17 ♕xe4! ♕xe4 18 ♗xe4 ♖xe4 19 ♔h2 ♗xd4 20 ♖xd4 d5 21 cxd5 cxd5 22 ♖xd5 and White had a healthy extra pawn. However, with the help of opposite-coloured bishops and some luck, Black escaped with a draw on the 91st move in Malaniuk-Golubev, Alushta 1994.

2...d6 3 g3 g6 4 ♗g2 ♗g7 5 0-0 0-0 6 c4 ♘bd7

Note that Black can use the 'anti-♕c2' move order 6...c6 7 ♘c3 (7 ♕c2 ♗f5!) 7...♘bd7, having in mind 8 ♕c2 (8 e4 e5 leads to the main lines) 8...♘b6! 9 b3 d5! with equality, as in Fominykh-Bologan, Vladivostok (A.Zaitsev mem) 1995. Of course, by playing ...c6 at such an early stage Black narrows his own choice as well.

7 ♕c2 e5 8 ♖d1 *(D)*

B



This is White's most important sideline in the ...♘bd7 system. Possibly it is objectively less dangerous for Black than the main direct plan with ♘c3 and e4, but Black has no reason to be relaxed. To begin with, it is not yet clear

which of Black's three main answers offers him most chances.

8...♕e7

In the majority of games Black develops his queen here (at once, or after 8...♖e8). The fact that White has already played ♖d1 gives Black more reasons to play ...♕e7 than he usually has in the main lines.

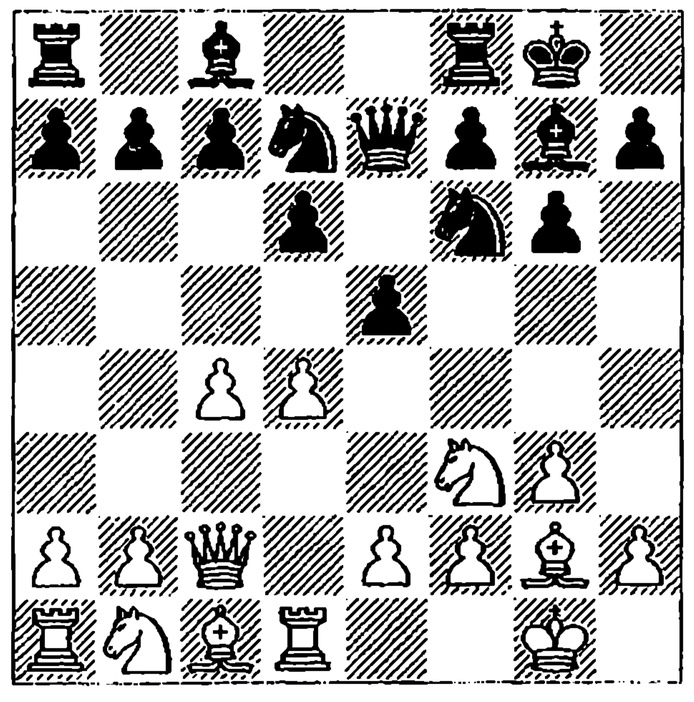
A slightly more popular move is 8...♖e8, when, according to Geller (and I tend to agree), White's most precise move is 9 e4 (9 dxe5!? dxe5 10 e4 c6 11 h3 is Romanishin's favourite system, where White can fight only for a slight advantage; 9 ♘c3 gives Black the additional possibility of 9...e4!?, and after 9...c6 White's main move is anyway 10 e4, while 10 b3 gives Black a choice between 10...♕e7 and the sharp 10...e4!? 11 ♘g5 e3) 9...c6 10 ♘c3. I once played this as White, and Black opted for 10...♕c7!? (after 10...exd4 11 ♘xd4, 11...♘e5? is bad due to 12 c5, as I learned from Trichkov-Golubev, Katowice open 1992; instead Black usually plays 11...♕e7; 10...♕e7 transposes to the main game) 11 h3 (in his book, Geller recommends as White's best 11 b3, but his line 11...b5 12 ♗a3 exd4 13 ♘xd4 bxc4 14 ♘a4! in fact hardly gives White any advantage after, e.g., 14...♘b6!?, as in Kinsman-Bronstein, Gausdal 1990) 11...a6! (better than 11...b5 12 c5! dxc5 13 dxe5 ♘xe5 14 ♘xe5 ♕xe5 15 ♗f4 ♕e7 16 ♗d6, when Black does not have the a7-square for his queen) 12 ♗e3 b5! 13 c5 dxc5 14 dxe5 ♘xe5 15 ♘xe5 ♕xe5 16 ♗f4 (critical was 16 f4!? ♕h5 17 e5 ♗xh3 18 ♗xc6! and, then, for example, 18...b4 19 ♗xa8 bxc3 20 ♗c6 ♗f5 21 ♕xc3 ♗e4 22 ♗xe4 ♘xe4 23 ♕c2) 16...♕e7 17 ♗d6, Golubev-Ciornei, Schwäbisch Gmünd open 2004, and here Black missed the chance to use the a7-square by 17...♕a7! 18 e5 ♗f5 with chances for both sides.

Another playable option is 8...exd4!? 9 ♘xd4 ♖e8 (Petrushin's 9...♘b6!? with the idea 10 c5 dxc5 11 ♘e6 ♗xe6 12 ♖xd8 ♖fxd8 is worth mentioning) 10 ♘c3, where Gallagher advises Black to play 10...a6!? 11 b3 ♖b8 (in the spirit of his own variation) and if 12 ♗b2, then 12...♘e5, as Van Wely twice played as Black. I cannot say that this line inspires me very much, but it is a matter of taste.

8...c6? would be a very flexible move, but, alas, it does not parry the threat of 9 dxe5 dxe5 10 ♘xe5. Then 10...♘xe5 11 ♖xd8 ♖xd8 might give Black chances in an Internet blitz, but it is hardly a choice for a serious game.

We now return to 8...♕e7 *(D)*:

W



9 ♘c3

Or 9 e4 c6 10 ♘c3, transposing.

After 9 dxe5 dxe5 Black has achieved decent results in practice. One of my games continued 10 b3 e4!? 11 ♘d4 ♖e8 12 ♘c3 c6 (12...a6!?) 13 h3 a6 14 ♕d2 ♘c5 15 ♗a3 ♕e5 16 ♕f4 ♕xf4 17 gxf4 ♗f8 18 e3 a5 19 ♖d2 ♘fd7!? and Black was able to maintain the balance, Kostiukov-Golubev, Ukrainian Cht (Alushta) 1995.

9...c6 10 e4

The alternative is 10 b3!?, and now:

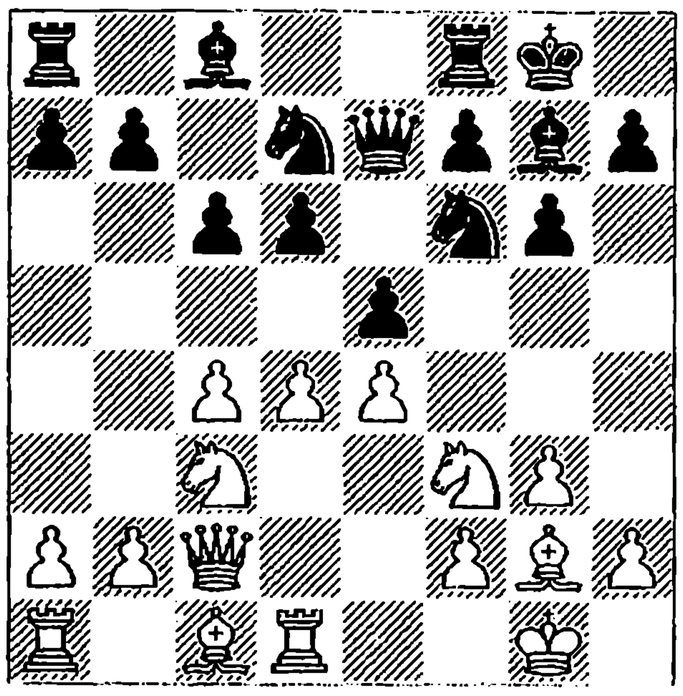
a) 10...exd4 11 ♘xd4 ♖e8 (11...♘c5 12 ♗f4!) 12 ♗f4! (12 ♗b2 ♘c5 13 e3 a5 14 a3 h5! with chances for both sides, Timman-Kasparov, Tilburg 1991) 12...♘e5 13 ♕d2 is somewhat better for White (Kasparov).

b) 10...♖e8 11 ♗a3 (11 h3 exd4 12 ♘xd4 ♘c5 13 ♗b2 ♗d7 14 e3 ♖ad8 15 ♖e1 ♘ce4 16 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 17 ♘f3 ♗xb2 18 ♕xb2 c5! with equality, Romanishin-Ilinčić, Elista OL 1998; 11 e4 exd4 12 ♘xd4 transposes to note 'b1' to Black's 10th move, which is not a very dangerous line for Black) 11...e4!? gives Black sufficient counterplay, Ivanchuk-Yusupov, Brussels Ct (9) rpd 1991. When subjected to analytical scrutiny, some mistakes for both sides can be found, but I shall provide the rest of the game without notes so as not to disrupt its aesthetic flow: 12 ♘g5 e3 13 f4 ♘f8 14 b4 ♗f5 15 ♕b3 h6 16 ♘f3 ♘g4 17 b5 g5 18 bxc6 bxc6 19 ♘e5 gxf4 20 ♘xc6 ♕g5 21 ♗xd6 ♘g6 22 ♘d5 ♕h5 23 h4 ♘xh4 24 gxh4 ♕xh4 25 ♘de7+ ♔h8 26 ♘xf5 ♕h2+ 27 ♔f1 ♖e6 28 ♕b7 ♖g6 29 ♕xa8+ ♔h7 30 ♕g8+ ♔xg8 31 ♘ce7+ ♔h7 32

♘xg6 fxg6 33 ♘xg7 ♘f2 34 ♗xf4 ♕xf4 35 ♘e6 ♕h2 36 ♖db1 ♘h3 37 ♖b7+ ♔g8 38 ♖b8+ ♕xb8 39 ♗xh3 ♕g3 0-1. Incredible!

We now return to the position after 10 e4 *(D)*:

B



10...♖e8!?

Or:

a) 10...♘b6!? is to some extent playable: 11 b3 ♗g4 12 dxe5 (12 ♗e3 ♘fd7!) 12...dxe5 13 a4 ♖fd8 14 ♗a3 ♖xd1+ 15 ♘xd1 ♕c7 16 ♘e3 ♗xf3 17 ♗xf3 and now 17...♘bd7! (Shurygin-G.Kuzmin, St Petersburg 1997) with the idea 18 c5 ♗f8! denies White the chance to transfer his knight to d6.

b) Prior to this encounter with Malaniuk, I always played 10...exd4 11 ♘xd4 ♖e8, and with good results, but I had started to have doubts about this approach:

b1) The old-fashioned 12 b3, which my opponents invariably used, is not the strongest move. 12...♘c5 13 f3 ♘fd7! (13...a5 is met by 14 ♗e3!, transferring the bishop to f2) 14 ♖b1 (14 ♗e3 f5!; 14 ♗b2 ♘e5 {or 14...a5} 15 ♖ab1 a5 16 ♘ce2 {½-½ Kharitonov-Golubev, Alushta 1994} 16...h5 17 h3 ♗h6!? 18 ♗c1 ♗g7 19 ♗b2 ♗h6 20 ♗c1 ½-½ Forintos-Golubev, Germany tt 1995/6) 14...♘e5 15 ♘ce2 (15 h3 a5 16 a3 a4! 17 b4 ♘b3! 18 ♘xb3 axb3 19 ♖xb3 ♘xc4 20 a4?! ♗e6 21 a5 b6 22 axb6 ♕b7! with a clear advantage for Black, Matlak-Golubev, Karvina open 1992/3) 15...a5 16 a3 h5 17 h4 (17 b4 axb4 18 axb4 ♘e6 19 f4 ♘xd4 20 ♘xd4 ♘g4 21 h3? ♘f6 22 ♖e1 h4 23 gxh4 ♘xe4! and Black was better in Loginov-Golubev, Loosdorf open 1993 because White cannot go for 24 ♖xe4 ♗xd4+ 25 ♖xd4 ♗f5 26 ♖d3 ♕e2 27 ♕xe2 ♖xe2 28 ♖db3 ♗xb1 29 ♖xb1 ♖aa2! 30 ♗f1 ♖e1) 17...♗d7 18 ♗e3 a4 19 b4 ♘e6 with approximately equal chances, Salov-Kasparov, Linares 1991.

b2) 12 ♗f4!? ♘e5 13 b3 is the possibility which I wished to avoid.

b3) 12 ♗e3!?, transposing to the main game, is also more dangerous than 12 b3.

11 ♗e3!?

A pet move of GM Fominykh, who is a true guru in ♕c2/♖d1 lines. Or:

a) 11 b3 exd4 12 ♘xd4 is less critical, and transposes to line 'b1' of the previous note.

b) 11 h3 exd4 12 ♘xd4 ♘c5! 13 ♖e1 is not so dangerous for Black either. The game Cuderman-Gligorić, Yugoslav Ch (Sarajevo) 1958 ended in a rather logical repetition of moves after 13...♘g4 14 ♖d1 ♘f6, etc.

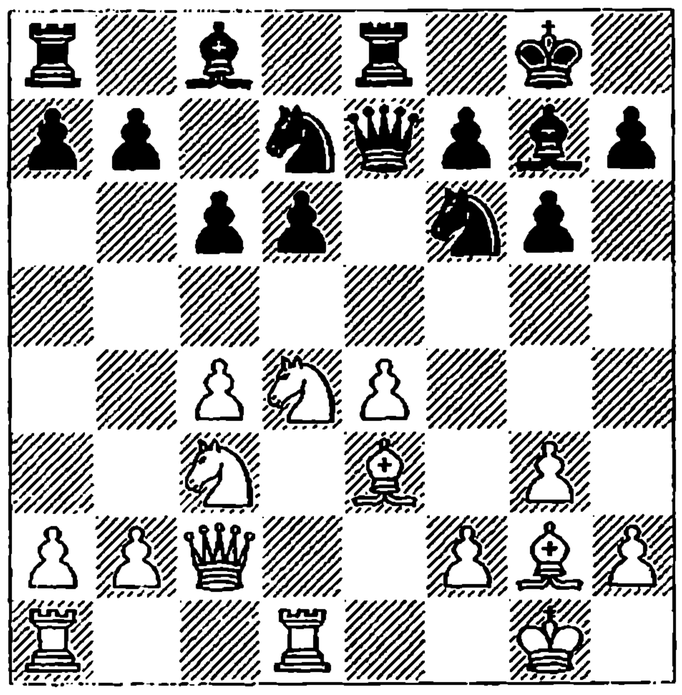
c) 11 d5!? is of interest. In M.Fiodorov-Golubev, Odessa open 2003 Black reacted rather unsuccessfully: 11...♘b6 (more usual is 11...a5 or 11...c5) 12 b3 c5 13 ♘e1 ♘h5?! 14 ♕e2! (preventing ...f5, though I went ahead regardless...) 14...f5?! 15 exf5 e4 and here White missed the possibility of 16 fxg6! ♗xc3 17 ♕xh5 ♗xa1 18 ♗g5! with a clear advantage.

11...exd4

So far, Black has never tried 11...♘g4, which should be answered by 12 ♗g5 f6 13 ♗c1.

12 ♘xd4 *(D)*

B



12...♘e5!?

Two other important possibilities:

a) 12...♘g4 13 ♗f4 ♘ge5 14 b3 ♘c5 15 h3 a5 (after 15...♘e6 16 ♘xe6 ♗xe6 Fominykh and Malaniuk have preferred 17 ♖ac1!? in their latest games) 16 ♗e3 a4 17 ♖ab1 axb3 18 axb3 ♘a6! and Black is alive, Fominykh-Smirnov, Tomsk 1988.

b) 12...♘c5 13 f3 ♘fd7 14 ♗f2 ♘e5 15 b3 a5 transposes to a position that has usually

arisen in practice via the move-order 11 b3 exd4 12 ♘xd4 ♘c5 13 f3 a5 (instead of 13...♘fd7!) 14 ♗e3 ♘fd7 15 ♗f2 ♘e5. Now 16 h3 a4 17 ♖ab1 axb3 18 axb3 h5 19 f4 ♘ed7 20 b4 ♘e6 (Baburin-Kovalev, Helsinki open 1992) seems to be an important continuation, where Black preserves counterchances.

13 ♕e2!

After 13 b3, 13...♗g4! 14 f3 c5 seems to work well for Black.

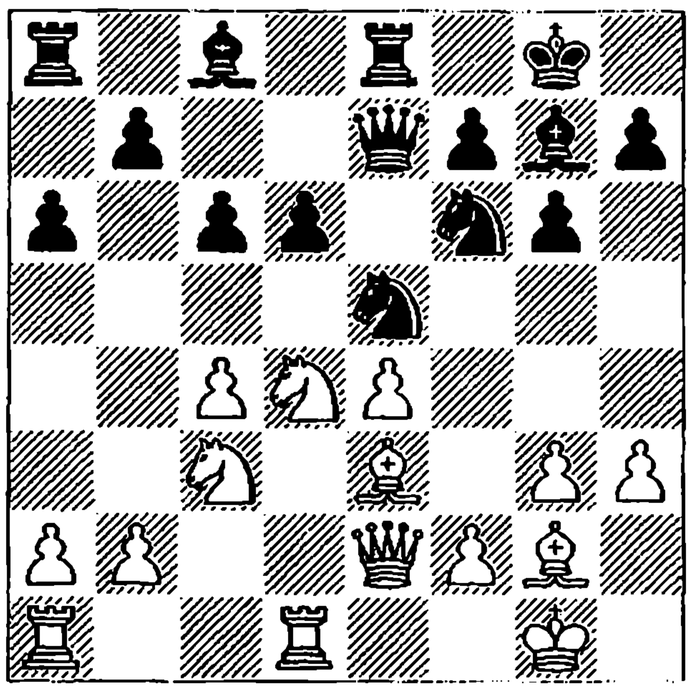
13...a6!?

After 13...a5 14 b3 ♘ed7, White calmly continued 15 ♕c2!? in Fominykh-Safin, Commonwealth Ch (Sangli) 2000. The immediate 13...♘ed7 can be answered by 14 ♖e1!? ♘c5 15 f3. One more idea is 13...d5!? 14 cxd5 cxd5 15 ♗g5! dxe4 16 ♘d5 ♕d8 17 ♘e6!? ♗xe6 18 ♘xf6+ ♗xf6 19 ♖xd8 ♗xd8, when Black is fighting only for a draw.

14 h3 *(D)*

Covering g4 and preparing f4. 14 a4 can be met by the standard 14...a5!?.

B



14...♘ed7

14...b5!? looks extremely risky for Black, but now I do not see any definite advantage for White in the following lines: 15 cxb5 (15 f4 ♘xc4 16 ♘xc6 ♕c7!; 15 ♘xc6!? ♘xc6 16 cxb5 axb5 17 e5 ♘xe5 18 ♗xa8 ♗xh3) 15...cxb5! 16 f4 (16 ♗g5 ♗b7 17 f4 ♘c4 18 ♖e1 ♕c7!) 16...♘c4 17 ♗f2 ♗b7 18 ♖e1 ♖ac8. So perhaps 14...b5 was worth trying.

14...♖b8 15 f4 ♘ed7 16 ♗f2 c5 17 ♘b3 b5 18 ♘a5 occurred in Fominykh-Mochalov, Minsk 1995 and seems to favour White.

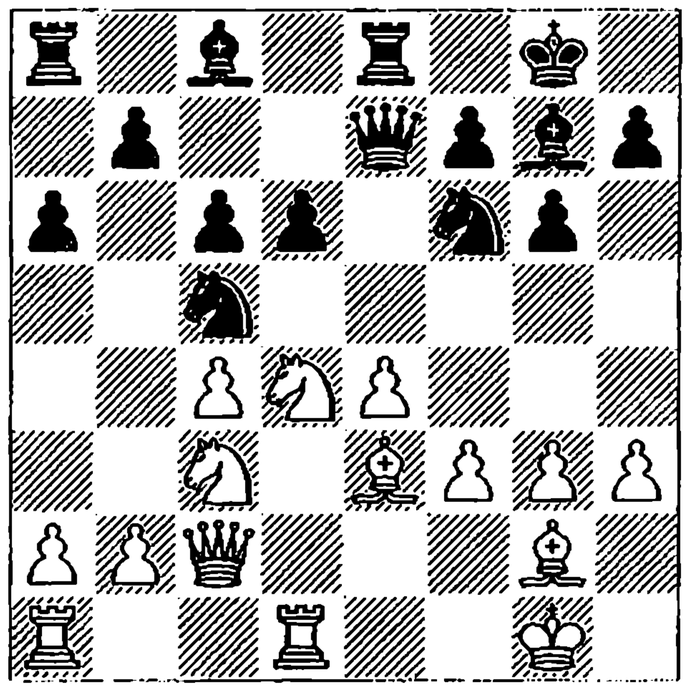
15 ♕c2

The most solid. There was an interesting alternative in 15 b4!? with the idea 15...c5 16 ♘c2.

15...♘c5 16 f3 *(D)*

After 16 ♖e1 Black should play 16...♗d7! (rather than 16...♘fxe4?! 17 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 18 ♗xe4 ♕xe4 19 ♗d2).

B



16...♘fd7?!

This move leads to a type of position where Black should really have his pawn on a5, rather than a6. It was better to choose between the two lines 16...♗d7!? and 16...d5!? 17 cxd5 ♘xd5! 18 ♘xd5! (18 ♘xc6 bxc6 19 ♘xd5 cxd5 20 ♗xc5 ♕c7!) 18...cxd5 19 ♘e2! (19 ♖ac1 ♘e6!) 19...b6 20 ♖xd5 ♗e6 with activity in return for the pawn.

17 ♗f2

White's advantage has now crystallized.

17...♘e5

Trying to provoke f4 before White regroups his rooks by ♖e1 and ♖ad1. After 17...h5 (planning to fight for dark squares with 18...h4) White's best is probably 18 f4!.

18 b3 h5 19 f4 ♘ed7 20 ♖e1 ♕f6?!

This and the next rather unnatural moves were played with the idea of ...h4, but White simply defends his f4-pawn twice and his advantage increases even more.

21 ♕d2! ♗h6?! 22 ♗e3

22 b4 ♘e6 23 ♘xe6 is also possible, when 23...♕xe6? is refuted by 24 ♘d5!.

22...♕e7 23 ♖ad1 ♘f6 24 ♗f2 *(D)*

The full collapse of Black's position is close. I decided to try a piece sacrifice, to force my opponent at least to calculate some variations. Unexpectedly, it worked.

24...h4!? 25 g4! ♗xg4 26 hxg4 ♘xg4 27 ♕e2 ♘xf2 28 ♕xf2 a5 29 e5 ♗g7 30 exd6

Objectively best, but 30 ♘f3 dxe5 31 ♘xe5 is simpler, as suggested by I.Belov in his *CBM* notes.

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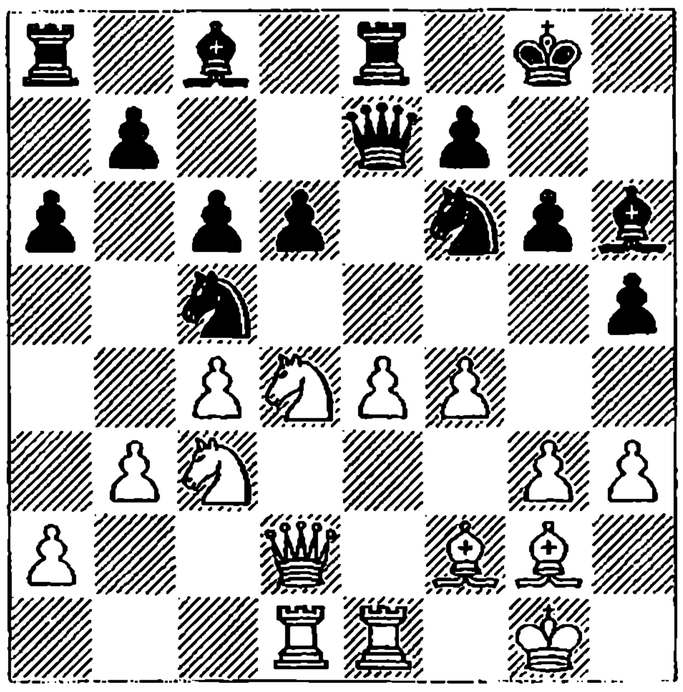

30...♕xd6 31 ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 32 ♘xc6 ♘d3! 33 ♘e5!

Not 33 ♕f3? ♕c5+ 34 ♔h2 (34 ♔f1 ♖e3!) 34...♘e1.

33...♗xe5 34 fxe5 ♖xe5 35 ♘e4??

White blunders a piece when he needed to find just one more precise move: 35 ♘b5!, and the rest is easy: 35...♕d8 (35...♘xf2 36 ♖xd6 ♘g4 37 ♗f3!?) 36 ♕d4!, etc. True to say, there were other possibilities to go astray: 35 ♕a7? h3!, 35 ♕xh4? ♕b6+, or 35 ♕f3? ♕d4+ 36 ♔h2 ♖e3!. But 35 c5!? should win as well.

35...♘xf2 36 ♖xd6

36 ♘xd6? ♘xd1.

36...♘xe4 37 ♖b6 ♘c5 38 a3 g5 39 b4 axb4 40 axb4 ♘d3 41 ♖xb7 g4 0-1

White could make a few more moves, but his position is lost. A disappointed Malaniuk resigned and even withdrew from the tournament after this game. On the other hand, following this game I needed only two draws to score my final GM norm. I also became the Ukrainian Champion in this tournament. (A piece of luck? Sure. But, for example, in Berlin 1993 I needed to face a GM in the last round, and even a loss would bring me a norm – but instead was paired with my friend, then IM, Doru Rogozenko. So I decided that my title was deserved, and slept well.)

Game 46
Templier – Golubev
Paris open 2004

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 g3 ♗g7 4 ♗g2 0-0 5 ♘f3 d6 6 0-0 ♘bd7

In the late 1980s I tried 6...c6 7 ♘c3 ♕a5!? (there also exists another tricky idea, 7...♕b6!?) and scored something like 3½ out of 4 with this move, but then stopped using it. Black has two main ideas: to attack the c4-pawn, or to transfer his queen to h5. One of my games went 8 ♕c2 ♕h5 9 b3 c5!? 10 dxc5 dxc5 11 ♗b2 ♘c6 12 ♖ad1 ♘b4 13 ♕c1 ♗h6 14 ♕b1 ♗f5 15 e4 ♗g4 16 e5 ♗f5 17 ♕a1 ♘c2 18 exf6 ♘xa1 19 fxe7 ♖fe8 20 ♘d5 ♗g7 21 ♗xa1 ♗e4 22 ♘c7 ♖xe7 23 ♘xa8 ♗xa1 24 ♖fe1 ♗f6 with a big advantage, Sloboda-Golubev, Minsk vs Odessa jr match 1988. But after 8 e4!? it seems that there is nothing better than 8...e5 9 h3 ♘bd7, transposing to the line that occurred in the featured game. The main alternative, 8...♗g4 9 h3 ♗xf3 10 ♗xf3, is not in my taste.

7 ♘c3 e5 8 e4 c6 *(D)*

The main and in many ways the most logical move. It is played by Black roughly twice as often as 8...exd4.

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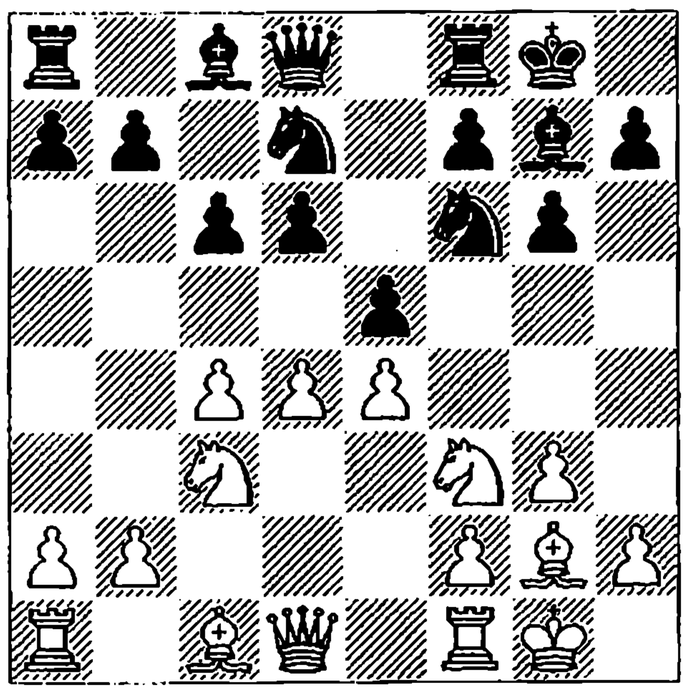

9 h3

This prophylactic move is, statistically speaking, White's absolutely dominant choice (and the possibility of transposition by 8 h3 c6 9 e4 makes it even more important). However, it would be hard to claim that all alternatives are worse. Let's look at them briefly:

a) 9 ♖b1 ♖e8 (9...a6!? is one of a number of playable alternatives; then, for example, 10 ♕c2 b5 11 ♖d1 ♕e7 12 b3 ♗b7 13 c5 dxc5! 14 dxe5 ♘g4 15 ♗g5 ♕e8!) 10 b3 exd4 11 ♘xd4 ♘c5 12 f3 (12 ♖e1 ♘g4!) 12...a5 13 ♗e3 ♘d7 14 a3?! ♘e5 15 ♕e2 (15 ♕c2 a4!) 15...f5 with strong counterplay, Nikolaevich-Golubev, Ternopol 1987.

b) After 9 ♗e3 the critical reaction is 9...♘h5 10 ♗g5 ♕b6 11 h3 exd4 12 ♘a4 ♕a6 13 hxg4 b5, introduced in Botvinnik-Smyslov, Moscow Wch (14) 1954. There followed 14 ♘xd4 bxa4

15 ♘xc6 (or 15 ♗e7 ♖e8 16 ♗xd6 ♘e5!?) 15...♕xc6 16 e5 ♕xc4 17 ♗xa8 ♘xe5 and Black had good compensation for the exchange. The line is very complex, and White has a number of interesting alternatives to 14 ♘xd4 – but he has not yet demonstrated any advantage.

c) 9 b3!? (the most topical of White's alternatives to 9 h3) 9...♖e8 (the most popular of many possible answers -- others include 9...a6!? and 9...♕b6!?, which GM Kotronias, a great expert in the 8...c6 line for Black, plays) 10 ♗b2 (nowadays the main topic of discussion is 10 h3! exd4 11 ♘xd4 ♘c5 12 ♖e1 a5 and now 13 ♗f4 or 13 ♖b1). One of the most famous King's Indian games, Zita-Bronstein, Prague vs Moscow 1946 continued 10...exd4 11 ♘xd4 ♕b6 12 ♕d2 (12 ♕c2! is better, when 12...♕xd4? loses the queen after 13 ♘a4) 12...♘c5 13 ♖fe1 a5 14 ♖ab1 a4 15 ♗a1 axb3 16 axb3 ♘g4! 17 h3 (or 17 b4 ♘d3!) 17...♖xa1! (but not 17...♘xf2? 18 ♘a4!) 18 ♖xa1 ♘xf2! and White was crushed.

d) 9 ♖e1 *(D)* and now:

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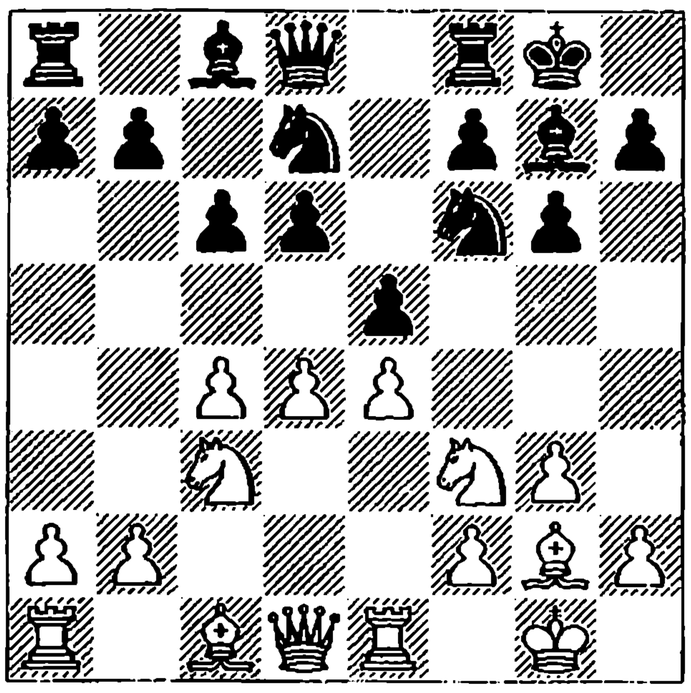

d1) 9...♕b6 10 b3!? (10 h3 just transposes to 9 h3 ♕b6 10 ♖e1) 10...exd4 11 ♘a4! ♕a5 12 ♘xd4 ♘g4 13 ♗b2 ♘c5 (not 13...♘ge5? 14 f4 trapping the knight) 14 ♗c3!. White ensures a change of pawn-structure (by 15 ♘xc5 dxc5). The transfer of the d6-pawn to c5 happens quite often in 8...c6 lines, and Black should know that only some really serious activity can counterbalance White's obvious plan with f4 and e5, grabbing a lot of space (and sometimes excluding the g7-bishop from play entirely). We shall follow one of my early games to illustrate these points. 14...♕c7 (perhaps Black has more hope of adequate counterplay after 14...♕d8 15 ♘xc5 dxc5 16 ♘e2 {Greenfeld-Fishbein, Beersheba 1991} 16...♘e5! 17 f4 ♘d3 18 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 19 ♖f1 ♗g4 – Knaak) 15 ♘xc5 dxc5 16 ♘e2 ♗xc3 (16...f5!?, preventing f4 and e5, was worth trying) 17 ♘xc3 ♕e5 18 ♕c2 ♕h5 19 h3 ♘e5 20 ♕d1! (Black does not have enough activity – White is better) 20...♕g5 (setting a small problem for White) 21 ♔h2? (not 21 f4? ♕xg3, but 21 ♖e3! was correct, covering d3 and blocking the c1-h6 diagonal, with a big strategic advantage) 21...♖d8 (Black is alive again) 22 ♕c1 ♕h5 23 ♖d1?! ♖xd1 24 ♕xd1 ♗g4 25 ♕f1 ♖d8 26 ♖e1 ♖d2 27 ♖e3 ♗xh3! 28 ♗xh3 ♖xf2+ 29 ♕xf2 ♘g4+ and Black is winning, Belin-Golubev, Odessa jr Ch 1982/3. (Australian readers may wonder if it was Igor Belin who played with White. Yes, it was. Many Odessa players of our generation are living now elsewhere in the world!)

d2) 9...exd4!? 10 ♘xd4 ♖e8 seems to be a very reasonable choice, and transposes to Game 47, Tukmakov-Golubev.

9...♕a5!?

I had prepared this line for just this single game – and as we shall see it did not lead to an opening success. Black's main idea is to attack the c4-pawn in various ways (b3 is prevented for the time being). Additionally, in some cases Black can consider continuing 10...b5. The famous Lev Polugaevsky (my favourite chess writer, thanks to his *Rozhdenie Varianta*; the revised English translation is called *Grandmaster Preparation*) did not use the King's Indian as Black very often, but played a couple of games with 9...♕a5 in the 1960s.

Instead, Black's main move is 9...♕b6 *(D)* (preventing 10 ♗e3), with the following important branches:

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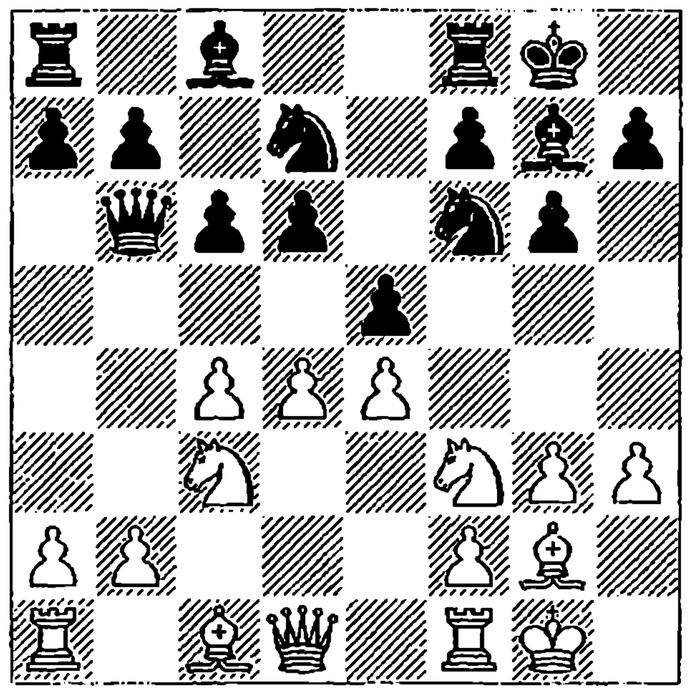


a) 10 ♖e1 (solid and popular) 10...exd4 11 ♘xd4 and now 11...♖e8 will be examined in

Game 47, Tukmakov-Golubev. Other moves seem somewhat suspicious: 11...♘g4 12 ♘ce2! ♘ge5 13 b3 ♘c5 14 ♗e3 a5 15 ♖b1 ♖e8 and now Furman's move 16 ♖f1! is strong. Or 11...♘e8 12 ♘b3 a5 13 ♗e3 ♕b4 and White sacrifices a pawn for a strong initiative by 14 a3 ♕xc4 15 ♘d4! or 14 ♘d4.

b) The line 10 d5 is considered to be fully playable for Black. 10...cxd5 11 cxd5 ♘c5 12 ♘e1 ♗d7 13 ♘d3 ♘xd3 14 ♕xd3 ♖fc8 15 ♕e2 (Black's set-up was inspired by the world-famous game Botvinnik-Tal, Moscow Wch (6) 1960 which went 15 ♖b1) 15...♕b4 (15...a5 16 ♗e3 ♕a6 is sometimes suggested for Black here) 16 ♗e3 ♖c4 17 ♖fc1 ♖ac8 18 a3 ♕a5 19 f3 ♘h5 20 ♕f2 f5 21 ♗xa7? (this cannot be good but Black has the better play in any case; e.g., 21 ♗f1 ♘xg3!? 22 ♗xc4 ♖xc4 23 ♕xg3 f4 24 ♗xf4 exf4 25 ♕xf4 ♕b6+ 26 ♔h1 ♕f2!) 21...♘xg3 22 ♗e3 f4 23 ♗b6 ♕a6 24 ♔h2 ♗f6 25 ♗f1 ♘xf1+ 26 ♖xf1 ♕a8 27 ♕e2 ♖8c5!? (sacrificing the exchange with the aim of transferring the queen to the kingside) 28 ♖ac1 ♗h4 29 ♗xc5 ♗g3+ 30 ♔g2 ♖xc5 31 ♖h1 ♕d8 (Black is fine) 32 ♘a2? ♗b5 33 ♕d2? ♕g5 34 ♖hg1 ♗e1+ 0-1 Maximenko-Golubev, Ukrainian jr Ch (Alexandria) 1984. I could have been proud of this game, but winning with the King's Indian seemed to be something natural for me at the time.

c) 10 dxe5 dxe5 is fully playable for Black as well: 11 ♕c2 ♕b4!? (a typical manoeuvre in this variation) 12 b3 ♕e7 13 ♗b2 b6 14 ♖ad1 ♗b7 15 ♔h2 ♖fd8 with a pleasant equality for Black, Albrecht-Golubev, Schmiden open 1992.

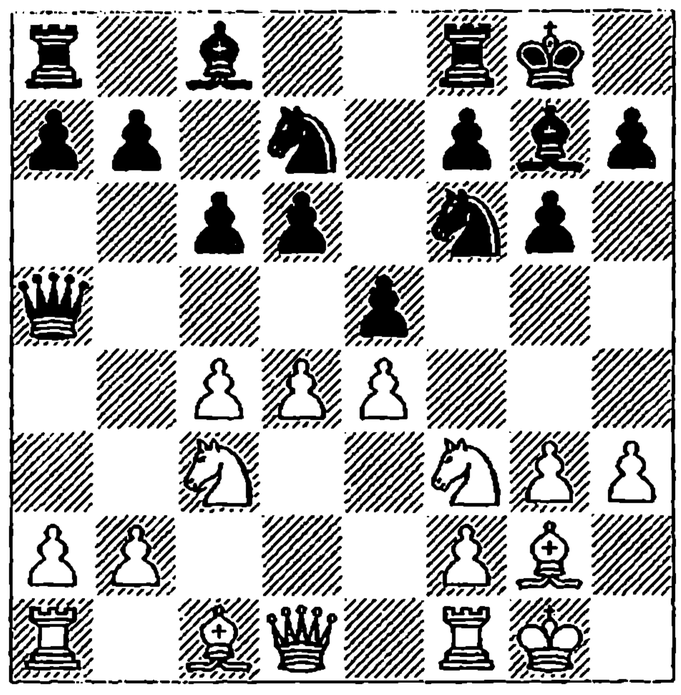
d) 10 c5!? is quite critical. 10...dxc5 11 dxe5 ♘e8 and now:

d1) 12 ♗g5 is the oldest attempt, and leads to double-edged play. 12...♘xe5!? 13 ♗e7 ♕xb2 14 ♖c1 ♘xf3+ (14...b6!? Geller) 15 ♕xf3 ♘c7 16 ♗xf8 ♔xf8 17 ♕d3! ♗d4 (17...♘e6!?) 18 ♘a4 (18 ♘e2!?) 18...♗xf2+? (18...♕b4 is much better) 19 ♔h2 ♕d4 20 ♕f3 ♕xa4 21 ♕xf2 ♗e6 22 ♕xc5+ ♔g8 23 ♕e7 ♕a5 24 ♖cd1 and Black is in trouble, Kaminik-Golubev, Odessa 1984. (Earlier, in 1981, I won the decisive game for my candidate master title in the 12 ♗g5 line, but the score seems to be lost.)

d2) Also double-edged is 12 ♘a4!? ♕a6 13 ♗g5 b5 14 ♘c3 ♘c7 15 ♗e7 ♖e8 16 ♗d6 ♘e6 as in Hübner-Kasparov, Dortmund 1992.

d3) The line that has put a number of players (including myself) off 9...♕b6 is 12 e6!? (introduced as late as in 1986) 12...fxe6 13 ♘g5 ♘e5 14 f4 ♘f7 15 ♘xf7 ♗d4+ 16 ♔h2 (or 16 ♔h1) 16...♖xf7 17 e5 (known since Shirov-Kasparov, Linares 1993). Black has an extra pawn, but the strategic initiative belongs to his opponent. This is very much against the spirit of KI players! But Kotronias is still playing the line as Black and, generally, 9...♕b6 can in no way be claimed to be refuted.

We now return to 9...♕a5 *(D)*.



10 ♖e1

After 10 ♗e3 Black has 10...♘b6!? (avoiding 10...exd4 11 ♘xd4 ♘b6 12 ♘b3!) with the main idea 11 ♕d3 exd4 12 ♘xd4 ♕a6! 13 b3 d5 14 ♕c2?! c5 15 exd5 (offering a piece sacrifice) 15...♘fxd5! (declining the offer), Lengyel-Polugaevsky, Lugano OL 1968.

10...exd4 11 ♘xd4 ♘e5

11...♖e8 12 ♗e3 ♘b6?! is strongly answered by 13 c5!, Polugaevsky-Uhlmann, Amsterdam IBM 1972.

12 ♗f1! ♖e8

In the past, Black invariably used this move, but recently 12...♗e6 started to attract some attention. Possibly 13 f4!? ♘xc4 14 ♘xe6 fxe6 15 ♔g2! (15 ♗xc4? ♕c5+) 15...d5 16 e5 ♘e8 17 ♗xc4 dxc4 18 ♕d4 promises White somewhat better chances: GM Ivanisević has scored as Black only half a point out of three games in this position.

13 ♖b1!? *(D)*

13 ♗e3 is a major alternative: 13...♗e6 (after 13...c5!? 14 ♘b3 ♕b4 15 ♗d2!, Dautov-V.Georgiev, Batumi Echt 1999, the position is more pleasant for White according to Dautov's notes) 14 ♘xe6 ♖xe6 15 f4 (15 a3?? ♘xe4!; 15

♔g2!?). Now Magerramov's idea 15...♘xe4 (safer is 15...♘ed7) 16 fxe5 ♘xg3 seems suspicious because of 17 exd6! ♖xe3 18 ♖xe3 ♕c5 19 ♕d3 ♘f5 20 ♖ae1 ♗d4 (White's main point is 20...♘xe3 21 ♘e4!) 21 ♘d1, etc.

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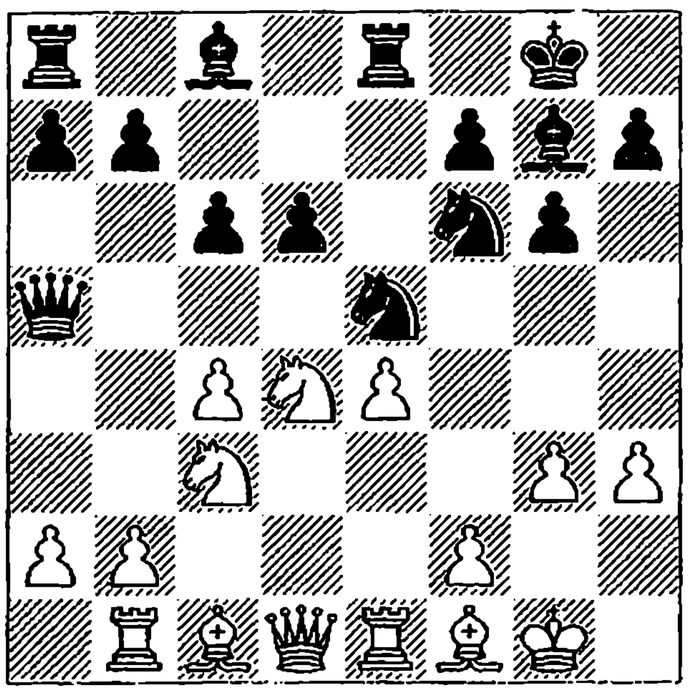

13...♗e6

'Almost forced' according to Geller. Still, I must note that ...♗e6, surrendering the light-squared bishop and giving White the bishop-pair, is rarely an attractive option for Black in the g3/...♘bd7 system (and I have usually avoided playing in such way). Not surprisingly, an alternative exists here: 13...d5!? and then, for example, 14 b4 ♕d8 15 cxd5 cxd5 16 ♗g5 (not 16 f4? ♘xe4! 17 ♘xe4 ♘d7!, Navara-Bojkov, Greek Cht 2005) 16...dxe4 17 ♘xe4 ♗f5 18 ♘xf5 ♕xd1 19 ♘xf6+ ♗xf6 20 ♖exd1 ♘f3+ followed by 21...♘xg5 (seen in black games of Grigore and V.Georgiev) leads to an endgame where White is slightly better, but Black has every chance to hold.

14 ♘xe6

The alternative is 14 b4 ♕c7 (14...♕b6!? 15 ♗e3 ♘xc4 16 ♗xc4 ♗xc4 is perhaps too risky for Black) 15 f4 ♘ed7 16 ♗e3 (16 f5 gxf5 17 exf5 ♗xc4! 18 ♖xe8+ {Cu.Hansen-Mortensen, Esbjerg 1988} 18...♖xe8! 19 ♗xc4 d5 20 ♗f4 ♕b6 21 ♘a4 ♖e1+! 22 ♕xe1 ♕xd4+ with unclear play – Hansen) 16...a5 17 a3 axb4 18 axb4 h5 19 ♗f2 ♘f8 20 ♕f3 ♕c8, preserving counterchances, Akopian-Movsesian, Las Vegas FIDE KO 1999.

14...♖xe6 15 b4

15 ♗e3? ♘xe4! with the idea 16 ♘xe4? ♕xe1 17 ♕xe1 ♘f3+ is a typical trap: White falls into it quite frequently.

15 ♔g2!? ♖ae8 16 f3 is an almost untested suggestion by Geller.

15...♕c7 16 f4!? ♘ed7 17 ♕d3 *(D)*

17 c5 dxc5 appears double-edged.

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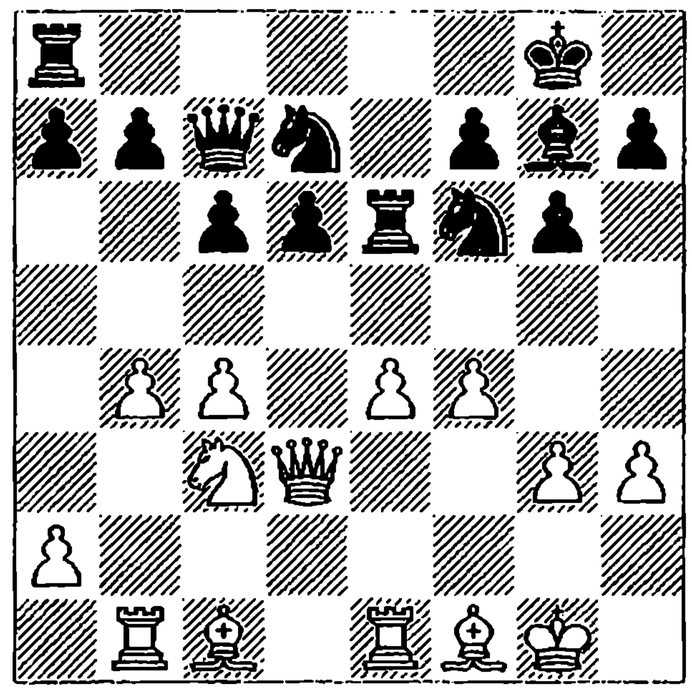

After the text-move, White preserves his obvious spatial advantage. It is necessary, but not so easy, for Black to find targets for his counterplay.

17...a6!?

17...♖ae8 18 ♗g2 ♘h5 prevents ♗e3, but White has other good options, such as 19 ♗d2!?.

A possible strategy for Black is to play on both flanks: 17...a5 18 a3 axb4 19 axb4 h5!? 20 ♗e3 h4 21 g4 g5, when 22 f5!? and ♗xg5 seems the critical way to accept the pawn sacrifice.

18 ♗g2!

18 a4?! is answered by 18...a5!.

18...♖ae8?

The consistent 18...b5 should be preferred. 19 cxb5 (after 19 ♗e3!?, 19...bxc4 20 ♕xc4 ♘xe4 21 ♘d5 ♕c8 22 ♗xe4 cxd5 23 ♕xd5 ♖b8 24 ♕d3 favours White, but Black could play 19...♘b6) 19...axb5 20 ♗e3 ♘b6 and here I correctly spotted that 21 ♗d4! is strong (with the idea 21...♘c4? 22 a4!), but nevertheless Black could fight by, say, 21...♖a3 or 21...♘h5.

19 ♗e3!

In the only previous game, Ristović-Dimitrov, Pozarevac 1995 a draw was agreed here. To make from that the correct evaluation of the position, one must also take into account the players' ratings (White: 2300, Black: 2520).

19...♘h5

It is hard for Black to find constructive ideas. He is trying to do something on the e-file.

20 ♗f2!

Avoiding 20 ♔h2? ♗xc3 21 ♕xc3 ♘hf6!.

20...♕d8

Panic. Basically, Black is preparing to sacrifice (or lose!) some material. My initial idea

was 20...♗xc3 21 ♕xc3 ♘df6 22 ♕d3 ♕e7 (attacking the e4-pawn), but after the precise 23 c5! Black's position collapses completely (not as clear is 23 f5? ♖xe4 24 ♗xe4 ♘xe4).

21 ♖bd1 ♕e7

21...g5 22 ♗f3 ♖h6 was another practical chance.

22 e5

22 c5!? dxc5 23 ♘e2! is also strong, almost forcing Black to sacrifice a piece for two pawns (in a no more promising version than in the game) by 23...♘hf6 24 e5 ♘xe5 25 fxe5 ♖xe5 26 ♗xc5 ♕e6.

22...dxe5 23 ♕xd7 ♕xb4 *(D)*

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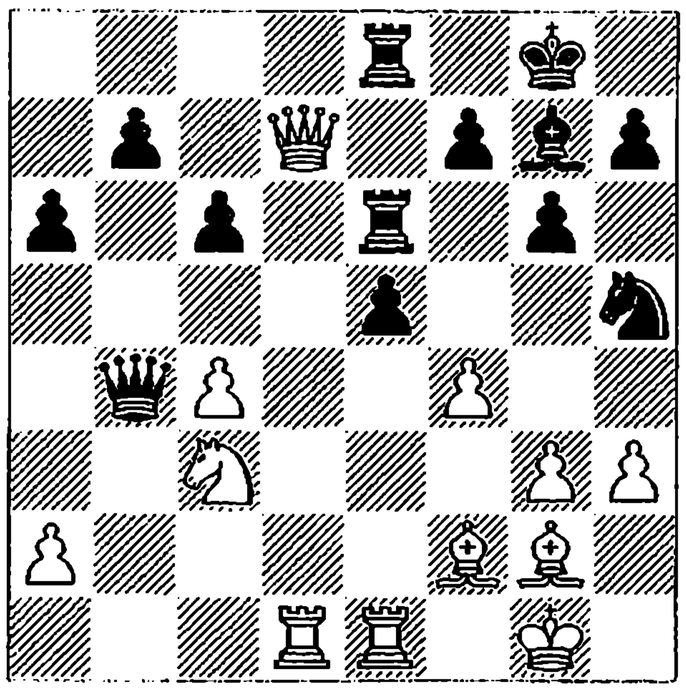

Objectively, Black does not have enough for the bishop. White's main problem is that he has too many options to consider: usually I retain some quiet optimism in such cases.

24 ♘e4

Simpler is 24 ♕d3!? exf4 25 ♖xe6 ♖xe6 and now 26 ♘e4! with a clear advantage (26 ♕d8+ ♗f8 27 ♘e4 ♖xe4!? 28 ♗xe4 fxg3 requires more calculations).

24...exf4 25 ♖b1

I was afraid of 25 ♗c5?! but in fact Black is OK after 25...♕a5! (25...♕xc4 26 g4 ♘g3? 27 ♕xe8+! ♖xe8 28 ♘f6+ ♗xf6 29 ♖xe8+ ♔g7 30 ♗f8+ ♔g8 31 ♗h6#) with the idea 26 g4 f5!.

However, another version of the same idea is much stronger: 25 g4! and Black has nothing better than 25...♘f6 (not 25...♘g3?! 26 ♗c5!, or 25...f3? 26 ♗xf3 ♘f4 27 ♗c5! followed by 28 ♕xe8+) 26 ♘xf6+ ♗xf6 with a very difficult position.

25...♕xc4 26 ♘d6?

White's advantage is somewhat less certain than one move earlier, but it still could have been preserved by 26 g4 or 26 ♖xb7. But fortunately for me, he was tempted by an incorrect idea.

26...♖xe1+ 27 ♗xe1

Black is also doing well in the case of 27 ♖xe1 ♖xe1+ 28 ♗xe1 ♕xa2 29 g4 ♘g3.

27...♕d4+ 28 ♗f2? *(D)*

A losing move (which might easily appear to be a winning one). In fact, only 28 ♔h1 ♖f8 29 gxf4 ♕xf4 30 ♘xb7 ♗e5 31 ♔g1 preserves hope.

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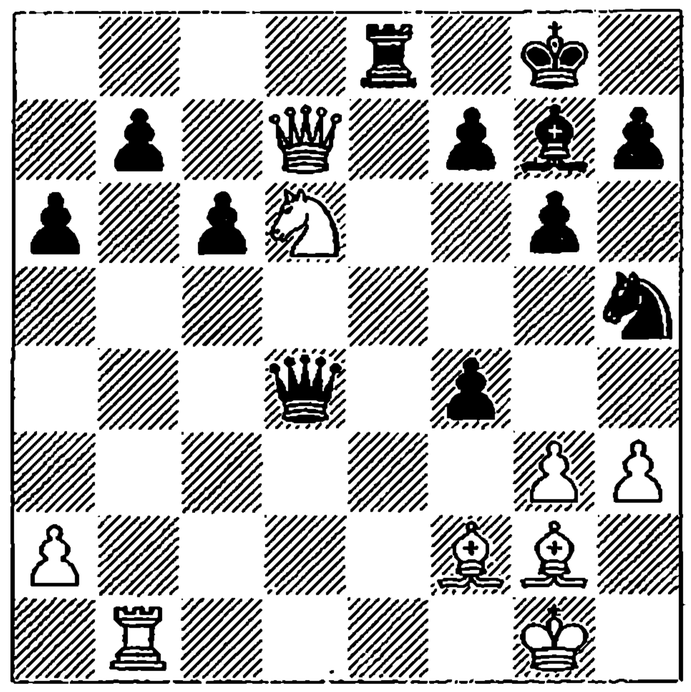


28...♕xf2+!!

Otherwise Black could give up.

29 ♔xf2 ♗d4+

A good day for the King's Indian bishop.

30 ♔f3

Or 30 ♔f1 ♘xg3#.

30...♖e3+ 0-1

White resigned in view of 31 ♔f2 (31 ♔g4 ♖xg3+ 32 ♔h4 ♗f6#) 31...♖e7+ 32 ♔f3 ♖xd7, when Black has a mass of extra pawns.

Game 47

Tukmakov – Golubev

Martigny open 1995

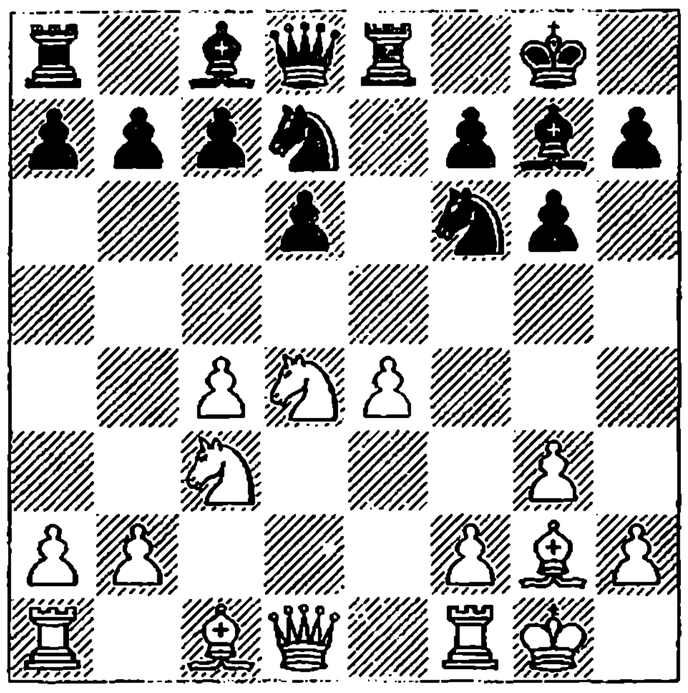
1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 g6 3 g3 ♗g7 4 ♗g2 0-0 5 c4 d6 6 0-0 ♘bd7 7 ♘c3 e5 8 e4 exd4 9 ♘xd4 ♖e8 *(D)*

10 ♖e1!?

This is White's most popular alternative to the main move 10 h3 (planning 11 ♗e3), which will be covered in Games 48-54.

After 10 b3 ♘c5! 11 ♖e1 (11 f3 is possible, but not too ambitious) Black develops counterplay by 11...♘g4! (or 11...a5!? 12 ♗b2 a4 as in Pachman-Bronstein, Prague vs Moscow 1946

W



there followed 13 ♖c1 c6 14 ♗a1 axb3 15 axb3 ♕b6! 16 h3 ♘fd7! 17 ♖b1 ♘f8 18 ♔h2 h5! 19 ♖e2 h4 20 ♖d2 ♖xa1! 21 ♖xa1 ♗xd4 22 ♖xd4 ♘xb3 23 ♖xd6 ♕xf2! and Black soon won). Now 12 f3 ♘e5 (as in Eingorn-Golubev, Odessa blitz 2002) transposes to note 'a1' to Black's 10th move, where Black has a promising position.

Botvinnik's old recipe 10 ♗e3!? *(D)* is rare nowadays, but nevertheless interesting. Then:

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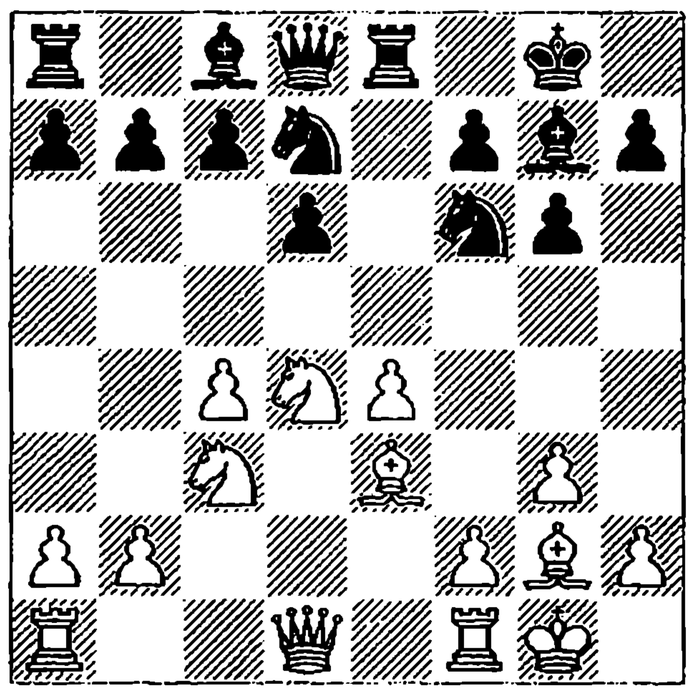


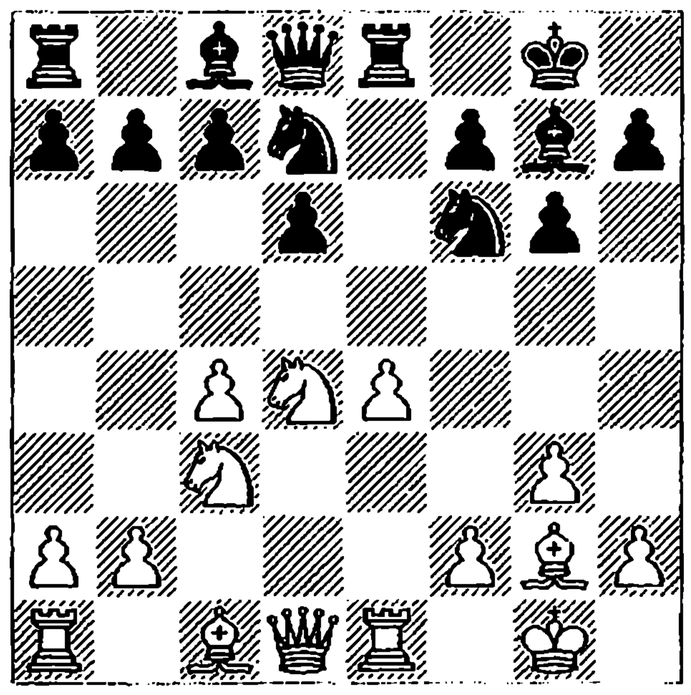
a) 10...c6 11 h3! is just what White wants.

b) 10...♘c5 11 f3 (11 ♕c2? ♘g4) and now 11...♘fd7 12 ♕d2 ♘e5 13 b3 c6 14 ♖ad1 seems to favour White: 14...a5 (or: 14...♕a5 15 ♘de2!? ♗e6 16 f4! ♘g4 17 ♗d4! Nataf; 14...♕e7 15 ♘de2 ♘ed3 16 ♘f4 ♘xf4 17 ♗xf4 ♗e5 18 ♖fe1 a5 19 ♗e3! ♕f8 20 ♗d4 a4 21 b4 ♘e6 22 ♗e3! with pressure, Yusupov-Nataf, Ohrid Ech 2001) 15 ♘de2 ♘ed3 16 ♘c1! (16 ♕c2 ♘b4 17 ♕b1 ♕e7 18 a3 ♘ba6 19 b4 axb4 20 axb4 ♘d7 is acceptable for Black according to Nataf) 16...♘xc1 17 ♗xc5 ♗xc3 18 ♕xc1 ♗b4 19 ♗d4 and White is better, Furman-Geller, USSR Ch (Moscow) 1949.

c) 10...♘e5!? 11 b3 ♘fg4 12 ♗c1 (after 12 ♗f4, 12...♘c6 13 ♘de2 f5 14 h3 ♘f6 15 exf5 ♗xf5 is certainly somewhat better for White, Botvinnik-Lilienthal, Leningrad/Moscow 1941, so Black could try 12...♗d7!?) 12...♗d7 (White is a bit better after 12...♘c6 13 ♘de2 f5 14 h3 ♘f6 15 exf5 ♗xf5 16 ♗e3, according to Atalik) 13 h3 ♘f6 14 ♗e3 ♕c8 15 ♔h2 h5 16 ♖e1 a6 and Black preserves counterchances, Korchnoi-Tkachev, Moscow OL 1994.

We now return to the position after 10 ♖e1 *(D)*:

B



10...c6!

During my preparation for the game I realized that this (not really new) move can be used by Black to transpose to a 8...c6 9 h3 ♕b6 10 ♖e1 line, while Tukmakov prefers 10 c5 in that line. Besides, it is not easy for Black to find a better move:

a) 10...♘g4 and now:

a1) Larsen-Stein, USSR-World (Belgrade) 1970 saw 11 f3?! ♘ge5 12 b3 ♘c5 13 ♗e3 f5! 14 ♕d2 fxe4 15 ♗g5 ♕d7! 16 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 17 ♖xe4 and Black missed 17...♘f7! with an advantage.

a2) Zlotnik's suggestion 11 ♘db5!? (with the idea 11...♘ge5 12 ♘d5 c6 13 ♘xd6 cxd5 14 ♘xe8 ♕xe8 15 exd5) remains untested.

a3) 11 h3! ♘ge5 (insufficient is 11...♕f6 12 hxg4! ♕xd4 13 ♕xd4 ♗xd4 14 ♘d5, when Black is forced to play 14...♗b6) 12 b3 ♘c5 13 ♗e3 c6 14 ♕c2 and White has reached an ideal arrangement of his forces: jumps by the black knights to d3 are not dangerous at all.

b) After 10...a6 (in the spirit of the Gallagher Variation) White can, if he wishes, delay h3, which makes it even more problematic for Black to make the plan with ...c5 and ...b5 work: 11 ♖b1! ♖b8 (11...♘g4 12 h3 ♘ge5 13 b3 ♘c5 14 ♗e3) 12 b3!. Now 12...♘c5 13 h3

transposes to the note to White's 13th move in Game 51.

11 h3!

Here it seems wise for White to prevent ...♘g4. Anything else looks rather unconvincing:

a) 11 b3 ♘g4! (not 11...d5? 12 exd5 ♖xe1+ 13 ♕xe1 cxd5 14 cxd5 ♘xd5 15 ♗xd5 ♗xd4 16 ♗e3 with an initiative for White, Strugatsky-Golubev, Ukrainian jr Ch (Alexandria) 1984) 12 ♗b2 ♘c5, planning ...♘e5 with the threat of ...♘ed3.

b) 11 ♖b1 ♘g4! 12 ♕xg4 (12 ♘xc6 bxc6 13 ♕xg4 ♘e5 14 ♕e2 ♗g4!? 15 f3 ♗e6, regaining the pawn) 12...♗xd4 13 ♕d1 ♗g7! 14 ♕c2 ♕a5 15 ♗d2 ♕h5!, Donner-Geller, Wijk aan Zee 1969.

c) 11 ♗e3 ♘e5! with the idea 12 b3 ♘fg4!.

11...♕b6! *(D)*

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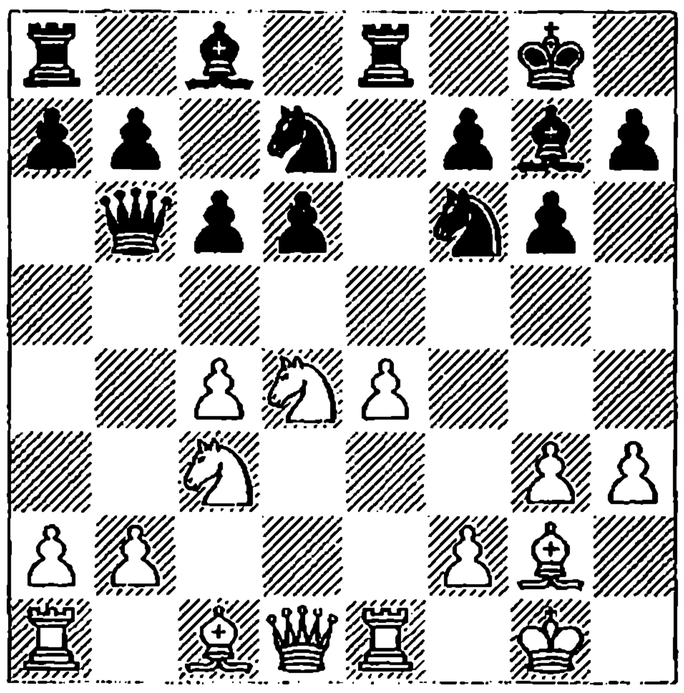

Black has prevented ♗e3 and transposed to an important position, which is well known because of the move-order 8...c6 9 h3 ♕b6 10 ♖e1 exd4 11 ♘xd4 ♖e8. There is a lot of 'old' theory, but no ultimate conclusion available as of yet. I would say that White can hope for an advantage, but the play is very complicated. The line seems to be playable for both sides. Now Black's main idea now is not 12...♘xe4 (which is risky), but rather 12...♘g4!. All White's main moves are aimed at making 12...♘g4 impossible or less effective.

12 ♘c2!?

This is certainly one of the main options at White's disposal. Other possibilities:

a) 12 ♘de2?! is artificial: 12...♘c5! 13 ♕c2 (13 ♕xd6? ♖d8) 13...♕b4 14 ♗f4 (14 b3? ♘fxe4) 14...♕xc4 and Black is at least not worse, Blagojević-Golubev, Skopje open 1991.

b) 12 ♘b3 is not dangerous for Black either: 12...♘e5! 13 ♗e3 (13 ♕xd6 ♘xc4 14 ♕c5 ♕xc5 15 ♘xc5 ♘d7! already favoured Black in Vaisman-Golubev, Ukrainian Ch sf (Simferopol) 1988) 13...c5! 14 ♗f1 ♗e6 15 ♘d5 ♗xd5 16 exd5 ♘e4 with good play for Black, Epishin-Kasparov, Moscow PCA rpd 1995.

c) 12 ♘a4!? is of some interest: 12...♕a5 (12...♕c7 is a sound alternative) 13 ♗f4 ♘e5 14 b3 ♘fd7 15 ♗d2 ♕d8 16 ♗c3 ♘c5 17 ♘b2 a5 18 a3, Karpov-Balashov, Moscow 1981. Here 18...♕b6!? was suggested as Black's best option.

d) 12 ♖e2!? *(D)* is an important and popular idea:

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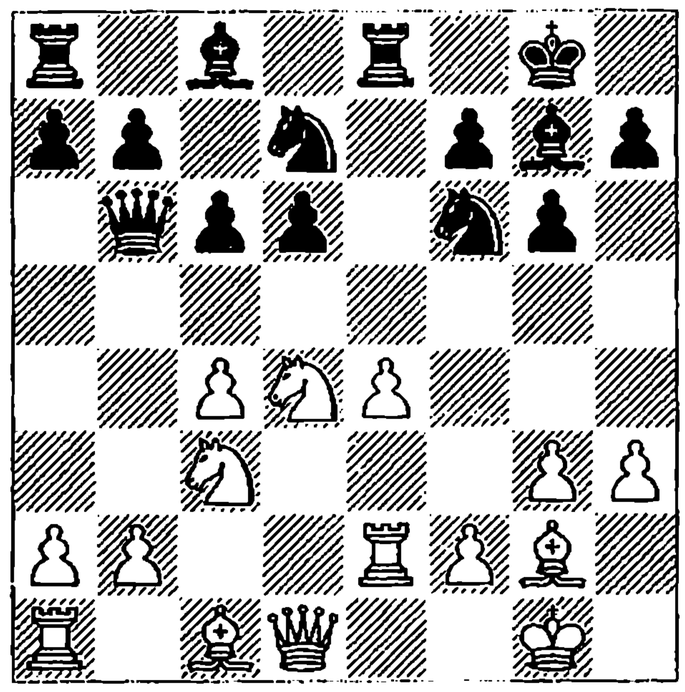
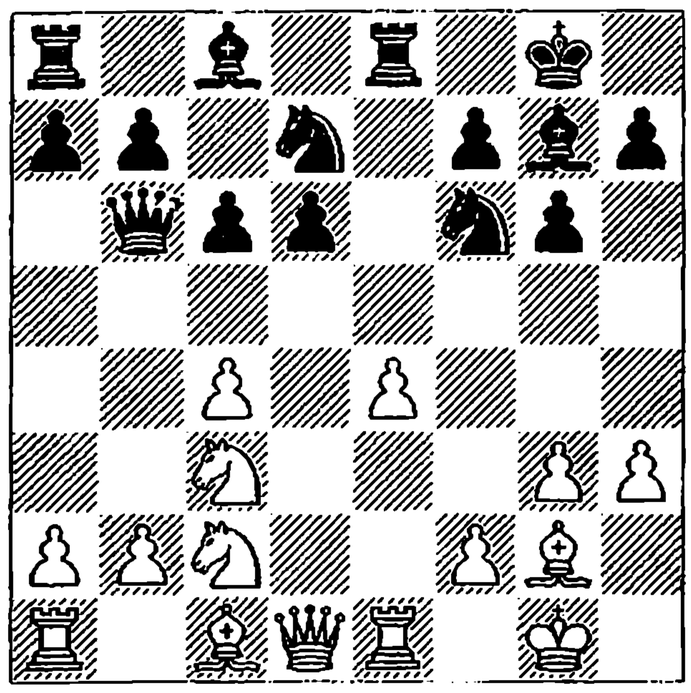


d1) 12...♕b4 13 ♖c2 ♘c5 14 ♗d2 ♕b6 15 ♗e3 a5 was Geller's main suggestion in his book, but 16 ♘b3! a4 17 ♘xc5 dxc5 18 ♖b1, introduced in Akopian-Sherzer, Biel IZ 1993, seems to be somewhat better for White: note that 18...♕b4?! fails to 19 ♘b5! cxb5 20 ♗d2.

d2) 12...♘g4 13 ♖d2! (13 ♘c2?! ♘ge5 14 ♘e3 ♘c5 and now 15 b3? ♗xh3 {Botvinnik-Geller, Belgrade 1969} or 15 ♖d2 ♗e6! – Geller) 13...♘ge5 14 b3 ♘c5 15 ♖c2! (15 ♘de2 ♗xh3! 16 ♗xh3 ♘f3+ 17 ♔g2 ♘xd2 18 ♗xd2 ♘xe4 19 ♘xe4 ♖xe4 with chances for both sides, S.Guliev-Korotylev, Moscow (Goldberg mem) 1998) 15...a5 (White is clearly better after 15...♗xh3?! 16 ♗xh3 ♘xe4 17 ♗e3 ♘xc3 18 ♖xc3 c5 19 ♘c2 ♘f3+ 20 ♕xf3 ♗xc3 21 ♗xc5!, Bagirov-Geller, Lvov Z 1978) 16 ♗e3 a4 17 ♖b1 axb3 18 axb3 and here Black should probably prefer the modest 18...♕c7, retaining hopes for counterplay, over the tempting but dubious 18...♕b4?! 19 ♘a2 ♕a3 20 b4 ♘e6 21 ♘c1!, when the black queen is in trouble, Fridman-Schaefer, Essen 2001.

We now return to 12 ♘c2!? *(D)*: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12...♘e5!?

Or:

a) 12...♕c5?! can be answered by 13 ♗e3!? (13 ♗f1 is not bad either) 13...♕xc4 14 ♕xd6 with an initiative for White. 14...♘e5?! 15 f4! ♘d3? loses to 16 ♘a3! ♕a6 17 ♗f1.

b) 12...♕c7!? 13 b3 (13 ♗e3 a6!? 14 f4 b5 gave Black counterplay in Marin-Kotronias, Batumi Ech 2002) 13...b6 (13...a6 14 ♗a3!) 14 ♗a3 ♘c5 15 b4 ♘fd7?! 16 e5! with a clear advantage for White, Ribli-Groszpeter, Austrian Cht 1997/8.

c) 12...♘c5 occurred in the well-known game Portisch-Stein, Sousse IZ 1967. There followed 13 b4! (stronger than 13 ♖b1 ♘g4! 14 hxg4 ♗xc3) 13...♘e6 14 ♗e3 ♕c7 15 ♕d3 a5 16 a3 ♘d7 17 f4 ♘b6 18 ♖ad1 (18 ♖ed1 axb4 19 axb4 ♖xa1 20 ♖xa1 f5! with the idea 21 exf5 ♘xf4 and 22...♗xf5 – Kasparov) 18...axb4 19 axb4 ♘a4 20 ♘xa4 ♖xa4. Now, instead of 21 ♕xd6 ♕xd6 22 ♖xd6 c5!, White should consider 21 ♗f2!?, when Black's position (as well as the entire line with 12...♘c5) does not look attractive to me.

13 b3! ♘fd7?!

I like this aggressive move, which creates the threat of 14...♘xc4 (14 ♗b2 does not help). But there is one small problem: I am not able to make it work properly. Therefore, attention should be paid to 13...♗e6 (suggested by Geller). After 14 ♘a4!? ♕c7 15 ♘d4 ♖ad8 16 ♘xe6 ♖xe6, 17 ♗e3 leaves White a bit better. (Instead, after 17 ♗b2 Black has 17...a6!, preparing ...b5, while 17 ♕c2, as in Karpov-Kamsky, Monaco blindfold 1995, allows 17...d5!? with great complications; e.g., 18 f4 ♘ed7 19 e5 dxc4 20 bxc4 ♘h5 21 g4 ♘xe5 22 fxe5 ♗xe5 23 ♗b2 ♗h2+ 24 ♔h1 ♖d2 25 ♕xd2 ♘g3+.26 ♔xh2 ♘f1+ 27 ♔g1 ♘xd2, etc.)

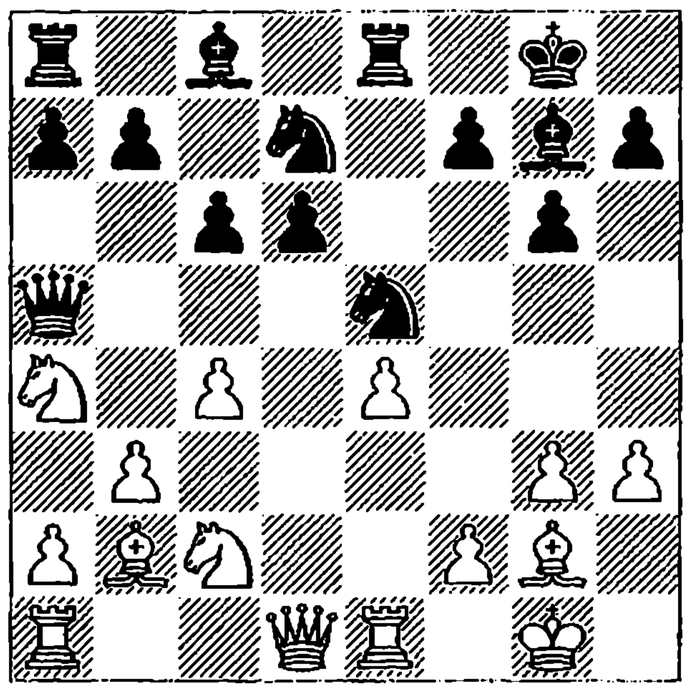
14 ♗e3?!

The critical line is 14 ♘a4! ♕a5 (14...♕a6 15 ♗b2 ♘c5 16 ♘xc5 dxc5 17 ♗c3! followed by f4 – Tukmakov), and now:

a) 15 ♗d2 ♕c7 16 ♗b4?! ♘c5! 17 ♘b2 a5 18 ♗xc5 dxc5 19 f4 was Klinov-Golubev, Odessa training match 1985, and now Black missed the possibility of 19...♗xh3!! with the key point 20 ♗xh3 ♖ad8 21 ♕e2 ♖d2!.

b) In Pizzi Possi-Najdorf, Mar del Plata 1947 Black was OK after 15 ♘b2 ♘f6 16 f4 ♘ed7 17 ♕xd6 ♕c3 18 ♕d3 ♕xd3 19 ♘xd3 ♘h5.

c) 15 ♗b2! *(D)* is very strong.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This move was proposed by Sergei Fedorchuk at a training session with Ukrainian juniors in 1995, when I acted as a coach. We did not find anything attractive for Black, and, on rechecking it now, it seems that the quality of our analysis (in which the 11-year-old Ponomariov also participated) was good:

c1) 15...b5 16 cxb5 cxb5 17 ♘c3 (less clear is 17 ♕d5?! ♕c7!) 17...♗b7 (17...b4 18 ♘d5 ♘f3+ 19 ♕xf3 ♗xb2 20 ♖ab1 is much better for White) and here 18 a3!? fixes White's positional advantage (instead, 18 a4 b4 19 ♘b5 ♘c5 20 ♘xd6 ♖ed8 21 ♘xb7 ♘xb7 gives Black some compensation for the pawn).

c2) 15...a6 16 f4! b5 17 ♗c3 ♕d8 18 ♘b2 and White is clearly better.

c3) 15...♘xc4?! 16 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 17 ♕d4+ ♘ce5 18 f4! and again White is much better.

c4) 15...♘c5 16 ♗c3! (an important intermediate move) 16...♕d8 (or 16...♕c7 17 ♘xc5 dxc5 18 f4 ♖d8 19 ♕e2 and 19...♘d3 20 ♗xg7 ♘xc1?! loses to 21 ♗e5) 17 ♘xc5 dxc5 18 ♖e3

g5!? 19 f4 gxf4 20 gxf4 ♘g6 21 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 and Black's position is not hopeless, but certainly uninspiring.

14...♕a5!

14...♕c7?! 15 ♗d4! with the idea 16 f4 – Tukmakov.

15 ♘e2

Almost forced (15 ♘a4? ♘xc4; 15 ♗d4?! c5).

15...♘f6!

Defending against 16 f4. Now Black has an acceptable game: both White's knights are a bit misplaced, and it is hard for him to take full control of the position.

16 ♗d4

After 16 g4 interesting is 16...♘fxg4!? 17 hxg4 ♗xg4 18 ♘cd4 c5 19 ♘b5 ♘f3+ 20 ♗xf3 ♗xf3.

16 ♕xd6!? is critical but unclear: one possible line is 16...♗xh3 17 ♗xh3 ♘f3+ 18 ♔g2 ♘xe1+ 19 ♖xe1 ♕xa2 20 e5 ♖ad8 21 ♕c7 ♕xc2 22 ♘d4!? ♕e4+ 23 ♘f3 ♖d3 24 exf6 ♗xf6 25 ♕xb7 g5! 26 ♗d7 g4 27 ♔h2 gxf3 28 ♗d2 ♖xd2 29 ♖xe4 ♖xe4 30 ♕xc6 ♖xf2+ 31 ♔h3 ♖ee2 32 ♕xf6 ♖h2+ 33 ♔g4 f2 with a draw.

16...♘ed7!? 17 ♘f4

Not 17 ♘c3?! c5!.

17...♘e5!?

A silent draw offer...

18 ♘e2!?

...which White accepts, repeating the position. Of course, there were possibilities to play on: 18 ♗b2 with the trap 18...♘fd7?! 19 ♗a3!, or 18 a3!? h5!?.

18...♘ed7 19 ♘f4 ♘e5 20 ♘e2 ½-½

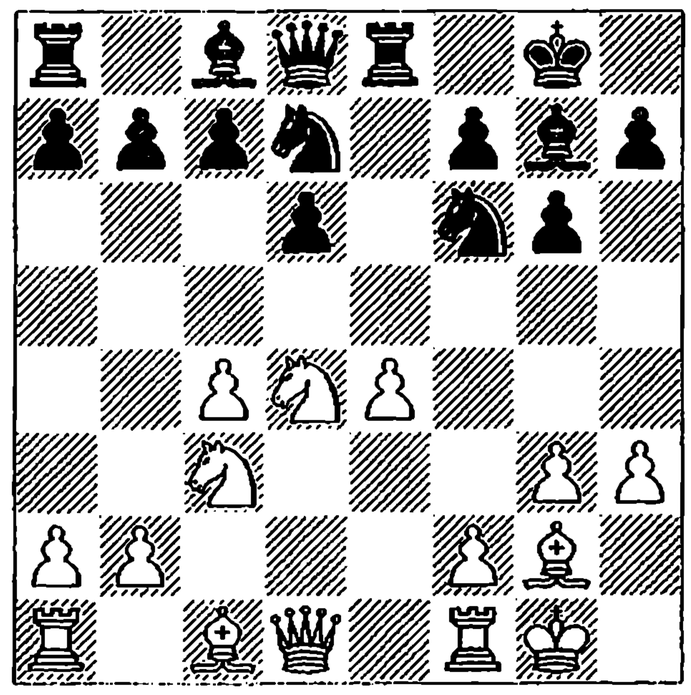
Game 48
Gutman – Golubev
Weilburg open 1995

1 ♘f3 ♘f6 2 g3 g6 3 ♗g2 ♗g7 4 0-0 0-0 5 d4 d6 6 c4 ♘bd7 7 ♘c3 e5 8 h3!? ♖e8

8 h3 usually makes no difference and ends up transposing to the main lines of 8 e4 after 8...c6 9 e4 or 8...♖e8 9 e4 exd4 10 ♘xd4. Only in the case of 8...a6 does White often abandon 9 e4 and play 9 dxe5 dxe5 10 ♗e3. In turn, Black has an independent option in the form of 8...exd4 9 ♘xd4 ♘b6!? 10 b3 d5 11 ♗a3 ♖e8 12 c5 ♘bd7 13 c6 ♘e5 14 cxb7 ♗xb7, as in Vaganian-Volokitin, Istanbul Ech 2003 and several other games.

9 e4 exd4 10 ♘xd4 *(D)*

B



10...♘c5

A popular move, which I have used only occasionally (the featured game was played in the last round of an open tournament and I wished to avoid any preparation). Therefore my coverage of it will be rather brief; I certainly have more to say about 10...a6 (Gallagher Variation), which leads to more concrete play – see the next six games. After 10...c6 11 ♗e3 Black has the idea 11...♘b6!? followed by ...d5, but this hardly guarantees him equality.

11 ♖e1

11 ♕c2? loses a pawn after 11...♘fxe4.

11...♗d7

More often Black plays 11...a5, but I do not like the type of position after 12 ♘db5!?, which prevents ...c6 and has given White good results in practice.

Another idea is Yurtaev's 11...h6!? 12 ♖b1 (White can play 12 ♔h2!?, when 12...♗d7 transposes to the main game) 12...♘e6! 13 ♘xe6 ♗xe6 and now:

a) 14 ♕d3 ♘d7 15 b3 ♘e5 16 ♕c2 ♕c8! (16...♗xh3?! 17 ♗xh3 ♘f3+ 18 ♔f1 ♘xe1 19 ♔xe1 ♕f6 20 ♘e2! ♕f3 21 ♔f1 favours White) and after 17 f4 ♘c6 18 ♔h2 Black wins a pawn by 18...♘b4! 19 ♕d2 ♗xc3 20 ♕xc3 ♘xa2 and 21...♘xc1.

b) 14 b3 ♕c8 15 ♔h2 ♘g4+ 16 hxg4 ♗xc3 17 ♗d2 ♗xg4 (17...♗g7?! 18 g5! was slightly better for White in Itkis-Golubev, Romanian Cht (Sovata) 2003, but Black managed to equalize after 18...hxg5 19 ♗xg5 ♗g4 20 ♕d2 ♖c7 21 ♖h1 a6 22 ♗f4 ♖h5+ 23 ♔g1 ♖xh1+ 24

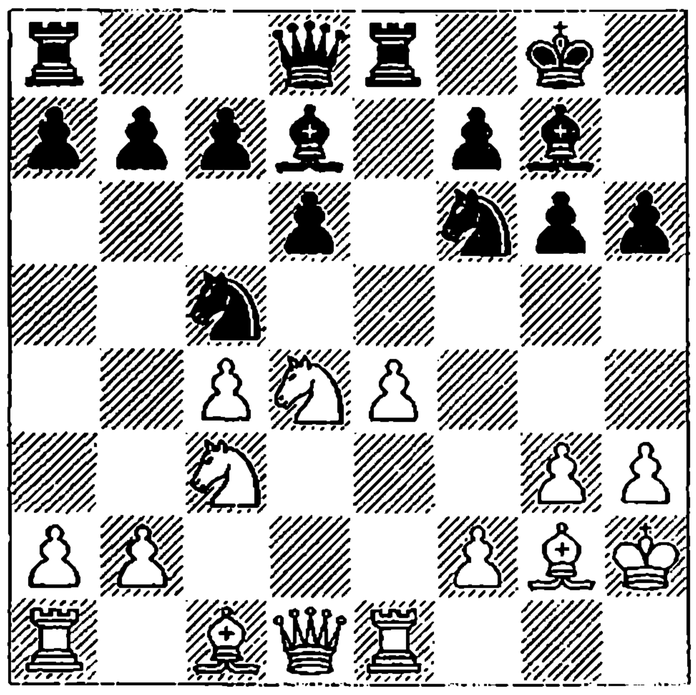
♗xh1 ♗d7! 25 ♖e1 ♗c6 26 e5 ♗xh1 27 ♔xh1 dxe5 28 ♗xe5 ♕e6!?, etc.; 17...♗f6!? is possibly playable) 18 f3 ♗xd2 19 ♕xd2 ♗d7 20 ♕xh6 ♖e5 21 g4 ♕f8! (21...♗xg4? 22 fxg4 ♕xg4 is refuted by 23 ♗h3 ♖h5 24 ♕e3 ♔g7 25 ♖g1 ♖xh3+ 26 ♕xh3 ♕f4+ 27 ♔g2! ♖h8 28 ♕c3+! f6 29 ♖h1! ♕xe4+ 30 ♕f3 ♕c2+ 31 ♔g3 and White should win) 22 ♕xf8+ ♔xf8 with equality. After 23 f4?! Black has 23...♖a5!, when both the a2- and g4-pawns are attacked.

12 ♔h2

Or 12 ♖b1 h6 13 b4 (13 f4 gives Black the interesting and untested possibility 13...♘fxe4!?; White also has safer options such as 13 b3 or 13 ♔h2) 13...♘e6 14 ♘xe6!? ♗xe6 15 ♕d3 (15 ♘d5 c6!?) 15...a5 16 a3 axb4 17 axb4 ♘d7 18 f4? (White continues to advance his pawns, but it was necessary to seek equality by 18 ♘d5! ♘e5 19 ♕f1!) 18...c6! (18...♘b6 19 ♘d5 ♘xc4 20 ♕xc4 c6 is not bad either) 19 ♗e3 (or: 19 ♘d5 f5! 20 ♘e3 ♘f6; 19 ♖d1 ♘b6! 20 c5 dxc5 21 bxc5 ♕xd3 22 ♖xd3 ♘d7 23 ♗e3 ♖a3) 19...♖a3 20 ♖ec1 (20 ♗d4 ♗xd4+ 21 ♕xd4 ♕b6!, winning the pawn) 20...♕f6 21 ♗d2 ♕d4+ 22 ♕xd4 ♗xd4+ 23 ♔h2 ♗xc4 with an extra pawn and a winning position for Black, H.Meier-Golubev, Martigny open 1995.

Sometimes White plays 12 b3, when Black can use Yurtaev's trademark idea 12...♕c8!? 13 ♔h2 ♖e5! (intending to continue with ...♖h5) with unclear play. One more possibility is 12 ♗f4, when Black's strongest answer is 12...h6!.

12...h6 *(D)*



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13 f3!?

The most usual is 13 ♖b1 a5 14 b3, when Black must choose between many options. One of them is 14...a4 15 b4 ♘e6, as played by Ilinčić and Spasov.

13...♘h5

By playing 13 f3, White clearly intended to develop his bishop to e3, with a very solid position. Understandably, Black tries to find an antidote against this plan, and, with a little help from his opponent, he succeeds.

14 ♗e3?!

Surprisingly, 14 f4!, pushing the f-pawn again, is the strongest move:

a) After 'neutral' answers such as 14...a5 White continues 15 ♗e3! with clearly better prospects.

b) The main point of White's 14th is that the tempting 14...f5? fails to 15 ♘xf5! gxf5 16 ♕xh5 fxe4 17 ♗e3! ♘d3 18 ♖e2 ♗c6 (or 18...♘xb2 19 ♖xb2 ♗xc3 20 ♕g6+!) 19 ♘d5!? with a big advantage.

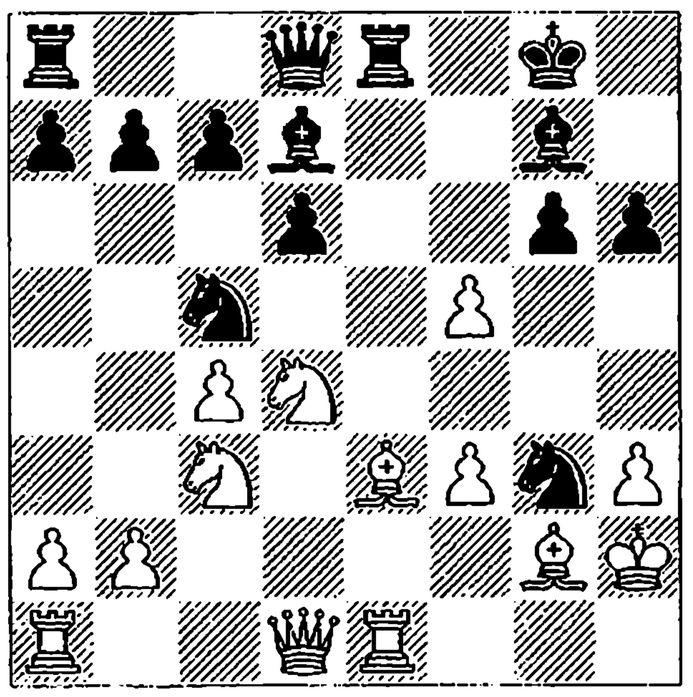
c) 14...♘f6!? (preventing 15 ♗e3) is an interesting possibility. Even if White is somewhat better, the game is very complicated. For example, 15 e5!? (after 15 b4 ♘e6 16 ♗e3 Black can consider 16...a5!? 17 b5 ♘c5 18 e5 dxe5 19 ♘f3 e4) 15...dxe5 16 fxe5 ♘h7 (rather than 16...♘h5 17 ♘f3! ♗c6 18 ♘d5!, when the h5-knight is out of play) 17 b4 ♘e6, preserving counterchances.

14...f5! 15 exf5

After 15 b4 Black plays 15...f4! (and not 15...♘e6?! 16 f4!) 16 gxf4 (16 bxc5 fxe3 17 cxd6 ♘xg3!) 16...♘e6! with the initiative for the pawn.

15...♘xg3! *(D)*

The point: with the help of a combination, Black destroys White's pawn-structure on the kingside. Instead, 15...gxf5? 16 ♘xf5 ♗xf5 17 ♕d5+ ♗e6 18 ♕xh5 ♘d3 19 ♗xh6 ♘xe1 20 ♖xe1 would favour White.



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16 ♘e6?!

Also good for Black is 16 ♔xg3?! ♖xe3! 17 ♖xe3 ♕g5+ 18 ♔f2 ♕h4+ 19 ♔f1 ♗xd4 20 ♕e1 ♕xe1+ 21 ♖exe1 ♗xf5 22 ♖e7 ♗d3+ 23 ♔e1 c6 with fantastic compensation for the exchange, and no better is 16 b4?! ♘xf5!.

16 fxg6 is necessary, when Black has good compensation for the pawn after 16...♘h5 (or maybe 16...♕h4!? with the idea 17 ♗f2 ♖xe1 18 ♕xe1 ♖e8).

16...♘xe6! 17 fxe6 ♘f5! 18 exd7 ♖xe3

With an indisputable advantage. White's position is destroyed, and his only hope, the d7-pawn, is not really dangerous.

19 f4

Or 19 ♕d5+ ♔h7! (stronger than 19...♔h8 20 ♕xb7 ♖b8 21 ♕xa7 and after 21...♖xe1? 22 ♖xe1 White is threatening 23 ♖e8+) 20 ♕f7 ♕h4 21 ♖xe3 ♘xe3.

19...♕xd7 20 ♕d5+

20 ♗xb7? fails to 20...♖xh3+.

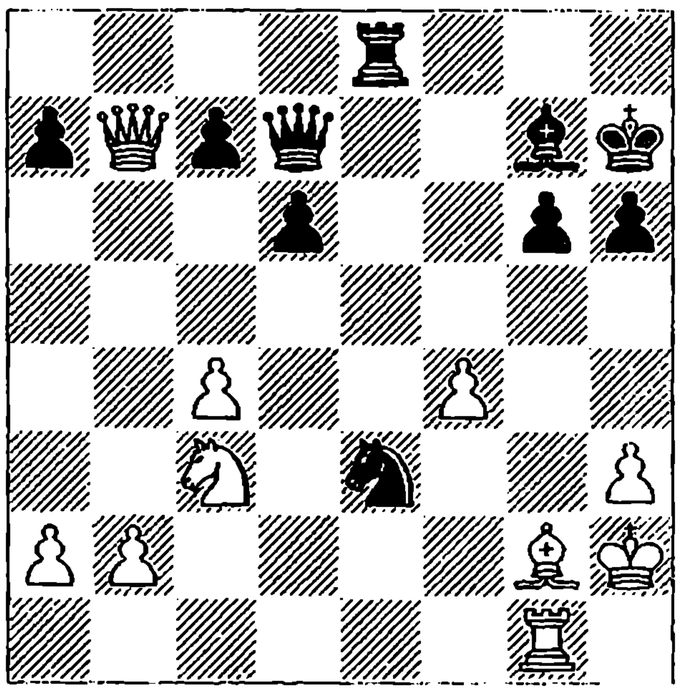
20...♔h7 21 ♕xb7 ♖ae8! 22 ♖xe3

22 ♗c6 ♕e7! with the idea 23 ♖xe3 ♕xe3 24 ♗xe8 ♕g3+ 25 ♔h1 ♕xh3+ 26 ♔g1 ♗d4#.

22...♘xe3! 23 ♖g1 *(D)*

Again, White cannot grab the material: 23 ♗c6 ♕f7 24 ♗xe8 ♕xf4+ 25 ♔h1 ♗e5 26 ♗xg6+ (26 ♕xc7+ ♔h8!) 26...♔g7! 27 ♕xc7+ ♔xg6 28 ♖g1+ ♔h5 and Black wins.

B



23...♕f5 24 ♕f3 ♘xc4

Both positional and material advantage are on Black's side now. He wins without serious problems.

25 ♕g4 ♕xg4 26 hxg4 ♘xb2 27 ♘b5 ♘d3 28 ♗c6 ♖e2+ 29 ♖g2 ♖e1 30 ♖g1 ♖xg1 31 ♔xg1 ♘xf4 32 ♘xc7 ♗d4+ 33 ♔h2 ♗e5 34 ♔g1 ♔g7 35 ♔f2 ♘d3+ 36 ♔f3 ♘b4 37 ♗d5 ♘xd5 38 ♘xd5 ♔f7 39 ♔e4 ♔e6 40 a4 h5 41 gxh5 gxh5 0-1

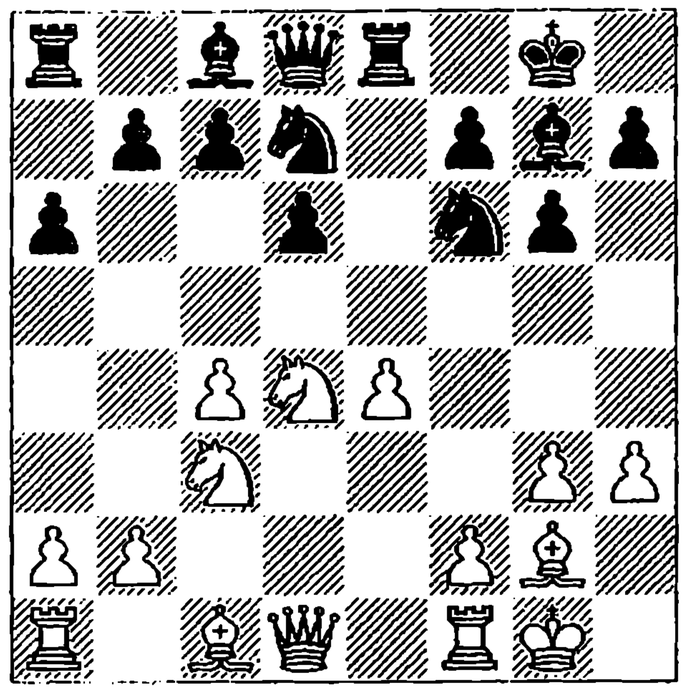
Game 49

Rustemov – Golubev

Minsk open 1993

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 d6 3 g3 g6 4 ♗g2 ♗g7 5 c4 0-0 6 ♘c3 ♘bd7 7 0-0 e5 8 e4 exd4 9 ♘xd4 ♖e8 10 h3 a6!? *(D)*

W



This is known as the 'Gallagher Variation'. The Swiss/British grandmaster was the first to employ the idea systematically around the end of the 1980s – and still continues to play it. Black has a very clear plan: he intends to continue with 11...♖b8 and then, depending on circumstances, 12...♘e5 13 b3 c5 (and 14...b5), or 12...c5 (and 13...b5). White has a really wide range of options and if he does not know exactly what to do, he can easily get an inferior position. We shall see that even Kasparov, playing White, once did not manage to avoid such a fate. Still, the theory is well developed now and I shall concentrate primarily on White's most dangerous ideas.

11 ♖e1

White's principal choice is between this move and 11 ♗e3. There is one important sideline, namely 11 ♗g5!? h6 12 ♗e3. White claims that ...h6 has weakened Black's position, rather than improved it. Now:

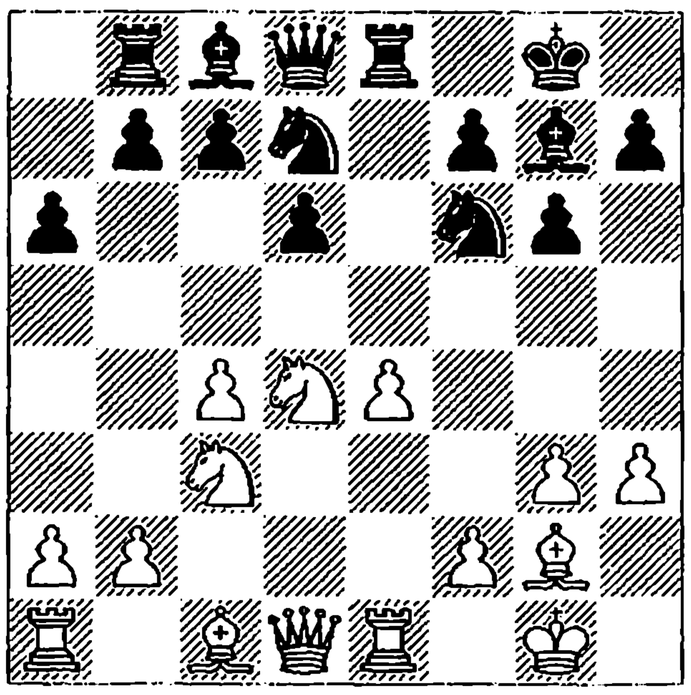
a) 12...♘c5 was tried in Ki.Georgiev-Golubev, Bundesliga 2001/2. I hoped that ...h6 would prove useful in conjunction with ...♘c5, but it seems that this is not true for positions where the white bishop is already placed on e3. The game continued 13 ♕c2 ♗d7 14 ♘de2!? (an extremely clever novelty: White intends to follow up with 16 ♗xc5! dxc5 17 f4 and 18 e5, ensuring a positional advantage) 14...♕e8 15

♔h2 ♖e5 (sometimes the rook manoeuvre works well, but mainly in cases where the white knight is still on d4) 16 ♗d4!? (16 b4! seems to lead to a clearer advantage for White) 16...♖h5 17 ♘f4 ♘g4+ 18 ♔g1 ♗xd4 19 ♘xh5! gxh5 (19...♘xf2? 20 ♘f6+!) 20 ♘d5 ♕d8 21 hxg4 hxg4 (21...h4 22 ♖ad1!) 22 ♖ad1 and here Black should probably have played 22...♗e5!? with some compensation for the exchange.

b) 12...♖b8 13 ♕c1!? (13 a4 ♘e5 14 b3 ♗d7 15 ♖a2 ♕c8 16 ♔h2 h5 transposes to note 'c2' to White's 14th move in Game 52, with the move-numbers increased by 1; 13 ♕d2 c5 14 ♘de2 ♘e5 15 b3 ♗xh3! 16 ♗xh6 ♕d7 was acceptable for Black in Gutman-Knaak, Münster open 1991) 13...♔h7 (13...c5!? is almost untested) 14 ♖d1 ♕e7 (14...c5 15 ♘de2 b5 16 cxb5 axb5 17 a4! b4 18 ♘b5 ♘xe4 19 ♗xe4 ♖xe4 20 ♘xd6 ♕e7 21 ♘f4! ♗b7 22 ♘xb7! ♖xb7 23 a5! occurred in Gutman-Gallagher, Biel open 1989; the position is still quite complex, but it is not easy for Black to neutralize White's initiative) 15 ♘d5 ♘xd5 16 exd5 with a slight advantage for White, Ki.Georgiev-Van Wely, Groningen PCA 1993. Possibly Black could now have tried 16...♘c5!? (in the game, White stepped up the pressure after 16...♕f6 17 b4 ♘e5 18 a4! ♗d7 19 ♖a3).

11...♖b8 *(D)*

W



12 a4

White radically prevents all play with ...b5 but delays the development of his pieces and also creates some weaknesses in his camp. Kasparov, who used 12 a4 against Topalov in 1999, later evaluated this move as dubious. In notes for his website he confessed that he was simply not prepared to meet the early ...a6. Perhaps another version of the same idea, 11 ♗e3 ♖b8 12 a4 (see Game 52, Adorjan-Golubev) is somewhat more justified strategically, but in any case, a4 can be considered at least a minor achievement for Black. White's main move, 12 ♖b1!, will be examined in the next two games, so here I shall just mention two less common alternatives:

a) 12 ♗e3 leads to complicated play after 12...♘e5 (or first 12...c5) 13 b3 (or 13 ♕e2!? c5 14 ♘c2 ♗e6 15 ♘a3 ♕a5!? 16 f4 ♘c6 17 ♕f2 ♘d7 18 ♖ac1 ♘d4, Markos-Borge, Copenhagen Politiken Cup 1997) 13...c5 14 ♘de2 (or 14 ♘c2 b5 15 f4 ♘ed7 16 ♕d3 b4 17 ♘a4, Moskalenko-Bakhmatov, Yalta open 1995; here Black should play 17...♗b7! 18 ♗f2 ♕e7) 14...b5 15 f4 ♘ed7 16 ♕xd6 (16 cxb5 axb5 17 e5!? dxe5 18 fxe5 ♘xe5 19 ♕xd8 ♖xd8 20 ♗xc5 ♘d3 21 ♖ed1 ♗a6!? 22 ♗e7 b4!? 23 ♗xd8 bxc3 and Black feels quite comfortable in the complications, Mikavica-Golubev, Lucerne open 1994) 16...b4 17 e5 bxc3 18 ♘xc3! ♘h5 19 g4 ♗f8 20 ♕d2 ♘g7 21 ♘d5!? and White has compensation for the piece, Skachkov-Bibkov, Tomsk 2002.

b) 12 b3!? has rarely been seen at GM level, but this move is poisonous. 12...c5 13 ♘c2 b5 14 ♕xd6! and now:

b1) After 14...♖b6, White's best is 15 ♕d3!.

b2) 14...♗b7 15 ♕d1! ♘e5 16 ♗f4 ♘h5 17 ♗xe5 ♗xc5 18 ♘d5 bxc4 19 bxc4 ♗xd5 20 cxd5 is somewhat better for White, Cu.Hansen-Gelfand, Munich 1992; Black could now try 20...♗c3!?.

b3) Possibly the untested 14...b4 deserves attention: 15 ♘a4 ♗b7 16 ♕d3 ♘xe4 17 ♗xe4 ♗xa1 18 ♘xa1 ♘e5 19 ♕xd8 ♖bxd8 20 ♔f1 ♗xe4 21 ♖xe4 ♖d1+ 22 ♖e1 ♖xe1+ 23 ♔xe1 ♘f3+ 24 ♔d1 ♖e1+ 25 ♔c2 ♘d4+ 26 ♔b2 and now Black should play 26...♘e2!? (rather than 26...♖e2+ 27 ♔b1 ♖xf2 28 ♘xc5 a5 29 ♗e3!? ♖f1+ 30 ♔b2 ♘e2 31 ♘a4 ♘c3 32 ♗b6! ♖b1+ 33 ♔c2 ♖xa1 34 ♘xc3 bxc3 35 a4! and White gets three connected passed pawns on the queenside).

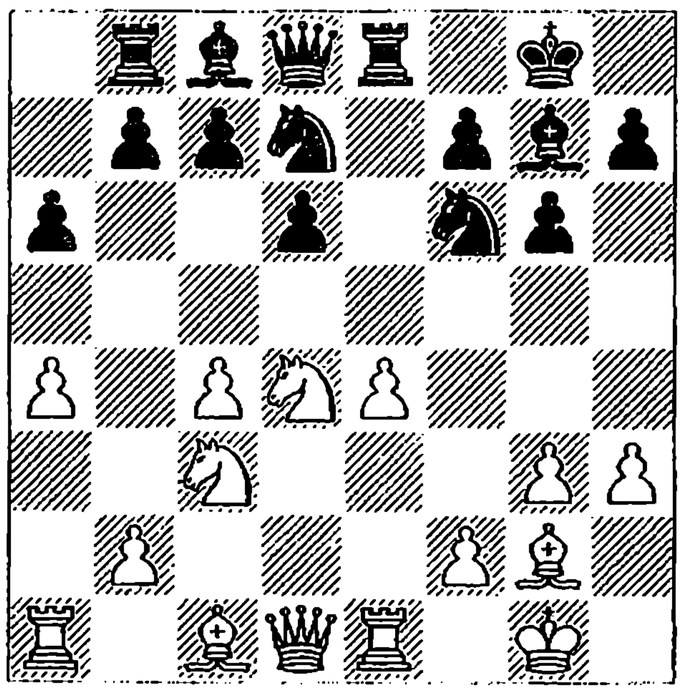
We now return to 12 a4 *(D)*:

12...♘c5!?

Instead, 12...a5 is answered by the typical 13 ♘db5! (preventing ...c6) with slightly better chances for White – this is what Kasparov was aiming for.

Several other moves have proved to be playable:

B



a) 12...♘e5 13 b3 ♗d7 (or 13...c5!? 14 ♘de2 ♗xh3 15 ♗xh3 ♘f3+ 16 ♔g2 ♘xe1+ 17 ♕xe1 ♘xe4 18 ♗e3 with an unclear position, Cosma-Nisipeanu, Romanian Ch (Bucharest) 1992) 14 ♖a2 ♕c8 15 ♔h2 h5 16 ♗g5 ♘h7 17 ♗e3 h4 18 gxh4 ♕d8 19 f4 and now 19...c5! (instead of 19...♕xh4 20 fxe5 ♗xe5+ 21 ♔g1 ♕g3 22 ♘d5 c6 23 ♘b6 ♗xh3 24 ♔f1 ♘f6 25 ♕f3, Bischoff-Knaak, Bundesliga 1991/2) 20 ♘de2 ♕xh4 21 fxe5 ♗xe5+ 22 ♔g1 ♗xh3 guarantees a draw for Black.

b) 12...c6!? (planning 13...a5 and 14...♘c5) 13 ♘c2 (13 a5!? ♘e5 with the idea ...c5 and ...♘c6 – Kasparov) 13...♘e5 (13...♘c5?! 14 ♗f4!) 14 ♘e3 ♗e6 15 b3?! (15 ♗f1 can be answered by 15...c5 or 15...b5!? with unclear play – Kasparov) 15...♘fd7! 16 ♗d2 ♘c5 17 ♖f1 ♘ed3 18 ♖b1 a5! and Black's position was already preferable in Kasparov-Topalov, Linares 1999.

13 a5

13 b4 could be answered by 13...♘cd7!?, while 13 ♕c2 a5 14 ♗e3 transposes to the game Itkis-Golubev – see note 'b' to Black's 12th move in Game 52.

13...♘fd7!

Threatening 14...♗xd4 followed by 15...♘b3 and also planning the transfer of the knight to c6.

14 ♗e3 ♘e5 15 ♗f1

Each way of defending the c4-pawn has its minuses. After 15 b3 ♘c6 White must defend the b3-pawn by the ugly-looking 16 ♖a3. After 15 ♕e2 Black also plays 15...♘c6! with the idea 16 ♖ad1?! ♘xd4 17 ♗xd4 ♗xd4 18 ♖xd4 ♘b3.

15...♘c6 16 ♘xc6 bxc6 17 ♕c2?

A gross mistake. Necessary was 17 ♗xc5! dxc5 18 ♕xd8 ♖xd8 19 e5! f6! with approximately equal chances.

17...♘b3 18 ♖ad1

Or 18 ♖a3 ♘d4 19 ♕d1 c5 with a dangerous initiative.

18...c5!

The hasty 18...♘xa5?! is wrong because of 19 ♕a4!. But now White loses the a5-pawn for nothing.

19 ♘d5 ♘xa5 20 ♕a4 c6 21 ♘f4 ♖b4!? 22 ♕c2 ♖xb2 23 ♕d3 ♘b3!?

The greedy 23...♘b7 was possible too.

24 ♕xd6 ♕xd6 25 ♖xd6 ♘d4 26 ♗xd4 ♗xd4 27 ♘d3

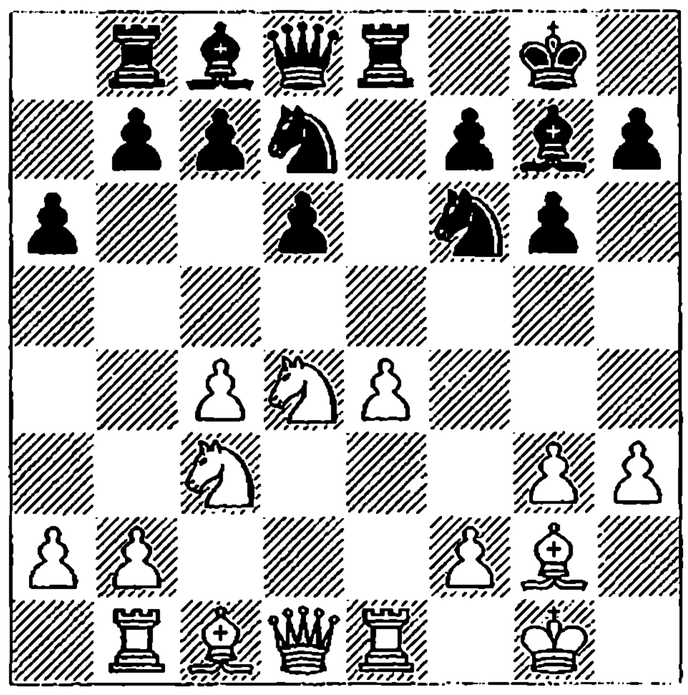
Or 27 ♘e2 ♗e5 28 ♖xc6 ♗b7 29 ♖xc5 ♗d6! with a decisive advantage.

27...♖b6 28 e5 a5 29 ♗g2 ♗b7 30 ♖e2 a4 31 ♖a2 ♖b3! 32 ♗f1 a3 33 ♖d7 ♖a8 34 ♖c7 ♗c8 35 g4 ♗e6 36 ♖xc6 ♗xc4 37 ♘c1 ♖g3+ 38 ♔h2 ♗xa2 0-1

Game 50
Timoshenko – Golubev
Alushta 1994

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 g6 3 c4 ♗g7 4 g3 0-0 5 ♗g2 d6 6 0-0 ♘bd7 7 ♘c3 e5 8 e4 exd4 9 ♘xd4 ♖e8 10 h3 a6 11 ♖e1 ♖b8 12 ♖b1! *(D)*

B



This seemingly modest prophylactic move is considered to be White's best.

12...♘e5

For 12...♘c5, see the next game.

After 12...c5 White has two important options:

a) 13 ♘f3 b5 14 ♕xd6 b4 15 ♘d5 ♘xe4 (15...♘xd5 16 ♕xd5 ♗b7 17 ♕d3 ♘f6 18 ♕xd8 ♖bxd8 19 e5 is better for White, S.Guliev-Ryskin, Nikolaev Z 1993) 16 ♕f4! f5 (Black can also try to hold by 16...♘ef6 17 ♘xf6+

♗xf6 18 ♖xe8+ ♕xe8 19 ♗e3 ♖b6, Baginskaite-Lukasiewicz, Wisla 1995) and, while Black seems to be alive after 17 ♗e3 ♗b7 or 17 ♘g5 ♘e5, his position is somewhat inferior.

b) 13 ♘c2 b5 14 ♕xd6! (14 cxb5 axb5 15 b4 ♕c7! is playable for Black; Goldin-Golubev, Berlin open 1993 continued 16 bxc5 ♕xc5 17 ♖b3 b4! 18 ♘b1! ♗b7! 19 ♘xb4 ♘xe4 and after 20 ♗e3 ♕a5 a draw was agreed despite White being somewhat worse; instead, 20 ♗xe4 ♖xe4 21 ♖xe4 ♗xe4 22 ♘a6 ♕f5! 23 ♘xb8 ♕xh3 24 f3 ♕xg3+ 25 ♔f1! ♕h3+ 26 ♔g1!, with a draw, is objectively best for White) 14...b4 (14...bxc4 15 ♘a3!) 15 ♘a4!. The position is very complex, but it is not easy for Black to prove his compensation. Here are some sample lines: 15...♗b7 (15...♖e6 16 ♕d1 ♕a5 17 ♘e3!) 16 ♘xc5!? ♘xc5 17 ♕xc5 (it is a shame that such greedy play can bring success for White – I can only hope that I missed something in my recent analysis) 17...♘xe4 (or: 17...♕d3?! 18 ♗f4!; 17...♗xe4 18 ♗xe4 ♘xe4 19 ♕d5!) 18 ♕xb4 (also possible is 18 ♕a7 ♕c8 19 ♗f4 ♖a8 20 ♕b6) 18...♗c6 (or 18...♘xf2 19 ♗xb7!, and if 19...♕d3, then 20 ♗e3!) 19 ♕a3 ♘c3 20 ♗xc6! and White seems to be better.

13 b3 c5

Possibly 13...♗d7 deserves more attention than it has received so far.

14 ♘c2! *(D)*

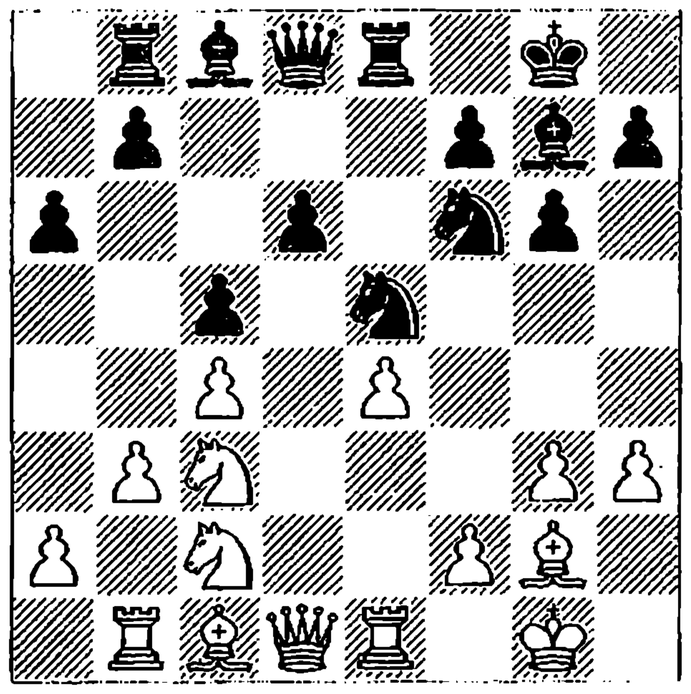
Stronger than 14 ♘f3 ♘xf3+ 15 ♕xf3 b5 (15...♘d7!? Van Wely) 16 ♗f4 ♘h5 17 ♗d2 ♘f6!? (17...♗e6 18 ♕d3 ♘f6?! was Lingnau-Golubev, Berlin open 1993; Black won the game in style, but I am afraid that 19 cxb5! axb5 20 ♘xb5 could refute this idea) 18 ♗f4 (preventing 18...♘d7) 18...♘h5 19 ♗d2 ♘f6 ½-½ Khuzman-Van Wely, Leeuwarden 1993.

After 14 ♘de2?! b5 15 cxb5 axb5 16 f4 ♘ed7 (Shapiro-Soltis, New York Marshall 1992) the e4-pawn is weak.

14...b5?

The logical continuation of Black's play, but it was refuted by Timoshenko very convincingly. Alternatives:

a) 14...♘h5?! (Marin-Golubev, Bucharest 1996) is also clearly insufficient: 15 ♗b2! (15 g4 ♘f6 16 f4, with the ideas 16...♘fxg4 17 ♘e2! ♕h4 18 ♖f1! and 16...♘exg4 17 e5!, seems to be good as well) 15...f5 16 exf5 ♗xf5 17 ♘d5 with strong pressure.



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b) Some attention has recently been focused on 14...♗e6!? (or 14...♘c6!?, which can transpose after 15 a4 ♗e6) 15 a4! (after 15 f4?! ♘c6 Black has the threat of 16...♕d7 17 ♔h2 ♘g4+! while 16 ♕d3 b5! 17 ♗d2 ♘d7 18 cxb5 ♘d4! 19 bxa6? c4 20 bxc4 ♘c5 was quite good for him in Gavrikov-Volokitin, Bad Wiessee open 2000) 15...♘c6 (15...♕d7 16 g4 ♘c6! 17 ♖e3! is somewhat better for White according to complex analysis by Nataf in *Informator*) 16 ♗b2 (16 ♖e3!?, as in Nikolić-Nataf, Ohrid Ech 2001 seems a bit artificial) 16...h5 17 ♕d2 ♘h7 18 ♖ed1 and here 18...♗e5 19 f4 ♗g7 was Yin Hao-Ye Jiangchuan, Shanghai 2000. I guess that after 20 ♕f2!? White's chances are better, but there is at least a lot of life and some room for improvements in these lines.

15 cxb5!

Simpler than 15 f4 ♘ed7 16 ♕xd6 (or 16 cxb5 ♘h5!) 16...♘h5.

15...axb5 16 f4! ♘ed7

Not 16...♘c6? 17 e5! and White wins a piece.

17 ♕xd6 ♘h5 18 ♕d3! c4 19 ♕e3!

Not, of course, 19 bxc4? bxc4 20 ♕xc4? ♗xc3! and Black wins material. After 19 ♕f3 ♘c5! 20 ♖d1 (20 bxc4 ♕d3) 20...♕e7!? Black has more hope than after Timoshenko's move.

19...b4

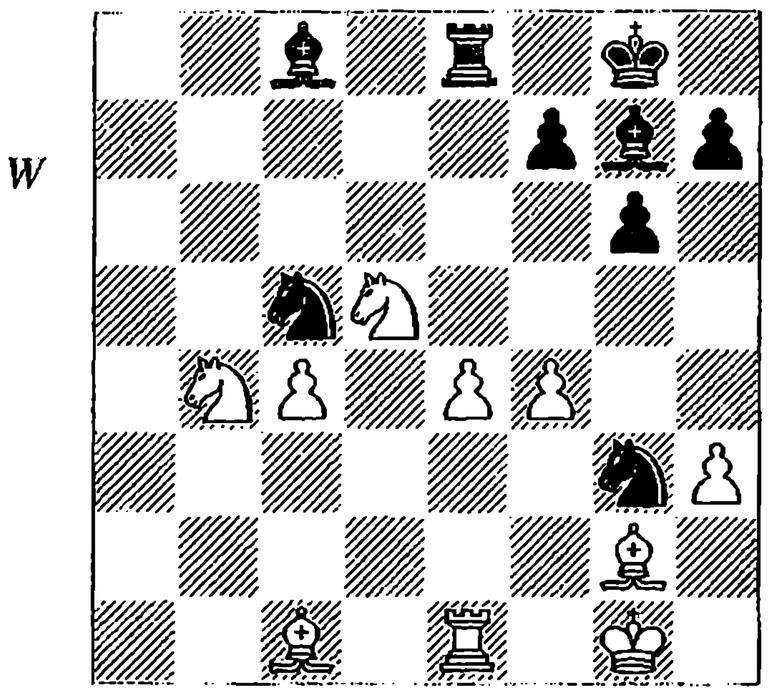
19...♘c5? now fails to 20 ♖d1! with a decisive advantage. After 19...cxb3 20 ♖xb3 White (as in the game) is a pawn up for no compensation.

20 ♘d5! ♕a5 21 bxc4 ♕xa2 22 ♕b3! ♕xb3 23 ♖xb3 ♘c5

Or 23...♗a6 24 ♖xb4 ♖xb4 25 ♘cxb4 ♗xc4 26 ♔h2.

24 ♖xb4 ♖xb4 25 ♘cxb4 ♘xg3 *(D)*

26 ♗e3?!



This does not spoil the advantage entirely, but unnecessarily complicates matters. 26 e5 or 26 ♘c7 would be simpler.

26...♘cxe4 27 ♗f2 ♗d7

After 27...♖e6 White plays 28 ♘c7 ♗c3 29 ♘xe6, when 29...♗xe1? 30 ♗xe1 ♗xe6 loses to 31 ♔h2!.

28 ♘c7 ♖c8 29 ♘bd5 ♘xf2 30 ♘e7+ ♔f8 31 ♘xc8 ♘d3?!

Black's best chance was probably 31...♗d4 32 ♔h2 ♘f5.

32 ♖e7! ♗h6?!

Again, 32...♗d4+ 33 ♔h2 ♗xc8 34 ♖e8+ ♔g7 is more resilient.

33 ♗d5!

Decisive. Black hoped for 33 ♖xd7? ♘e2+ 34 ♔f1 (34 ♔h1?? ♘f2+ 35 ♔h2 ♗xf4#) 34...♘g3+ with perpetual check.

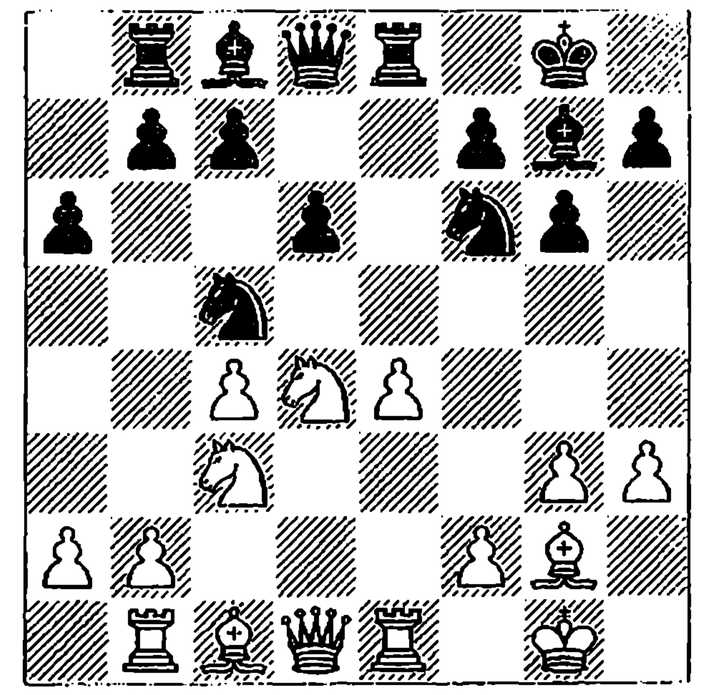
33...♗xc8 34 ♖xf7+ ♔g8 35 ♖d7+ ♔h8 36 ♖d8+ ♔g7 37 ♖xc8 ♘xf4 38 ♘e6+ ♔f6 39 ♘xf4 ♗xf4 40 c5 ♘f5 41 c6 ♗g3 42 ♖f8+ 1-0

Game 51

Portisch – Golubev

Biel open 1995

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 g3 ♗g7 4 ♗g2 0-0 5 ♘f3 d6 6 0-0 ♘bd7 7 ♘c3 e5 8 e4 exd4 9 ♘xd4 ♖e8 10 h3 a6 11 ♖e1 ♖b8 12 ♖b1 ♘c5 *(D)*



Black abandons his basic plan with ...c5 and ...b5 and tries to combine Gallagher's set-up with the more classical ...♘c5 and ...♗d7.

13 b4!?

The alternative is 13 b3 ♗d7 14 ♗b2 (14 ♔h2 ♕c8 15 b4 ♘e6 16 ♘de2 c5!?, Bagaturov-Golubev, Ostrava open 1992, and here 17 b5! deserves attention; after 14 b4!? ♘e6 15 ♘b3, 15...b5 16 c5 dxc5 17 e5! ♘h5 18 bxc5 seems promising for White, so Black can try 15...h6!? instead) 14...h6!? (14...b5 is most natural, but White is slightly better after the typical answer 15 cxb5 axb5 16 b4!) 15 ♕d2! (the idea behind 14...h6 is 15 b4 ♘e6! 16 ♘f3 ♘g5) 15...♕c8 16 ♔h2. Bagaturov-Golubev, Leuven open 2003 continued 16...♖e5?! (if Black had the pawn on a5 instead of a6, this would not be too bad...) 17 g4?! (correct was 17 b4! with a clear advantage, because 17...♗xh3?! 18 bxc5 ♖h5 is refuted by 19 ♖h1!) 17...♗xg4! 18 hxg4 ♕xg4 (Black has achieved the desired mess) 19 f3!? ♖h5+ 20 ♔g1 ♕g3 21 ♘de2 (I expected 21 ♔f1!?, but maybe Black is not doing badly after 21...♘d3 22 ♕xd3 ♘g4 23 ♘d1! ♖g5!?, etc.) 21...♕h2+ 22 ♔f2 (after 22 ♔f1, 22...♖g5 23 ♘f4 ♘fd7! seems to be strongest) 22...♖g5 23 ♘f4 ♘fd7! seems to be strongest) 22...♖g5 23 ♖g1 ♖e8! 24 ♔f1 ♘fxe4! 25 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 26 fxe4 ♖xe4 27 ♕d3?! (27 ♕xg5 hxg5 28 ♗xe4 ♗xb2, with the idea 29 ♖xb2 ♕e5!, is critical) 27...♖eg4! 28 ♗xg7 ♔xg7! 29 ♕c3+! ♔g8! 30 ♕h3 (or 30 ♕f3 ♖f5) 30...♖xg2! 31 ♕xh7 ♖xh2 32 ♖xg5 hxg5 33 ♖e1 f5! with a big advantage for Black, who later allowed his opponent to escape with a draw quite nicely. Not a perfect game, but a decent performance by both players, taking into account that two rounds per day were played in Leuven. For comparison, Ukrainian GM Alex Goloshchapov was so tired that he did not manage to show up for the last round at all.

13...♘e6

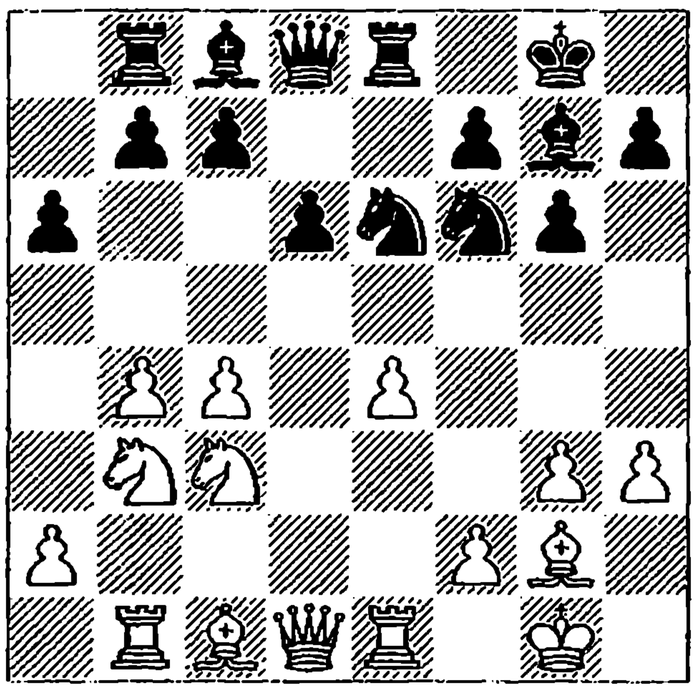
I was tempted to play 13...♘cd7, aiming to attack the c4-pawn – sometimes such a retreat can work very well. But what I disliked here was 14 f4!, with the idea 14...♘b6 15 c5! dxc5 16 bxc5 ♘xe4 17 ♘xe4, when White is clearly better. For example, 17...♕xd4+ 18 ♕xd4 ♗xd4+ 19 ♔h2 ♘d5 20 ♖d1 ♘c3 21 ♖xd4 ♘xb1 22

♘f6+ ♔f8 23 ♘xe8 ♔xe8 24 ♗b2 ♗e6 25 ♖d1 ♗xa2 26 ♗e5 ♖d8 27 ♖e1.

14 ♘b3 *(D)*

After 14 ♗e3 (Tukmakov-Gallagher, Zurich open 1994) Black can try the continuation 14...♘xd4!? 15 ♗xd4 ♗e6 16 ♘d5 c6, as suggested by Tukmakov.

B



14...♘d7!? 15 ♘d5

Perhaps Black has more problems after 15 ♗b2! and then, for example, 15...♘e5 (15...c6 16 ♕xd6 ♗f8 17 ♕d2!? ♗xb4 18 e5 ♘dc5 19 ♕xd8 ♖xd8 20 ♖ed1) 16 ♕e2 b5 17 cxb5 axb5 18 ♘d5! c6 19 ♘e3.

15...♘e5

An interesting idea, which did not occur to me during the game, is 15...c6!? 16 ♘e3 ♘g5!. It was worth a try.

16 ♘e3 ♘c6

16...c5 does not equalize: 17 f4 (17 ♗a3?! is met by 17...b5!) 17...♘c6 18 bxc5 dxc5 (or, similarly, 18...♘xc5 19 ♘xc5 dxc5 20 ♕xd8 ♖xd8 21 e5!) 19 ♕xd8 ♖xd8 20 e5!.

17 b5!

After 17 ♕d2 Black can consider 17...♘g5!? 18 ♘d5 ♘xh3+ 19 ♔h2 ♘e5 20 f4 ♘xc4 (rather than 20...♘xf4 or 20...♘g4+?! 21 ♔xh3 c6 22 ♘c3) 21 ♕c2 c6 22 ♕xc4 cxd5 23 ♕f1 dxe4 with chances for both sides.

17...axb5 18 cxb5 ♘cd4 19 ♘xd4 ♘xd4 20 ♖b4!

Black's idea was 20 ♗b2 c5! with acceptable play, because after 21 bxc6, he can reply 21...bxc6!.

20...♘e6

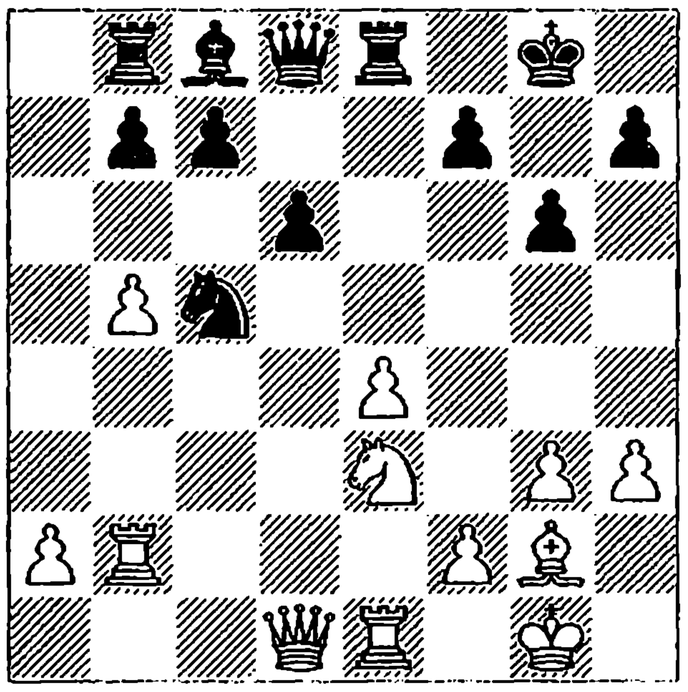
After 20...c5 21 bxc6 ♘xc6 22 ♖b1 ♗e6 23 ♘d5 White has an obvious strategic advantage in a rather calm situation.

21 ♗b2!

Stronger than 21 ♘d5 ♖a8, when White doesn't have anything special.

21...♗xb2 22 ♖xb2 ♘c5 *(D)*

W



23 b6?!

23 ♕d4! (threatening 24 ♘d5) is correct. Then, despite all Black's efforts, White preserves an edge. For example, after 23...♗e6 24 e5 b6 (24...♖a8 25 b6!) 25 exd6 ♕xd6 26 ♕xd6 cxd6 Black's defence does not promise to be too easy.

23...c6 24 ♘c4?

A bad blunder. 24 ♖d2 ♗e6! (24...♕xb6?! 25 ♘c4!) 25 f4 ♕xb6 26 f5 ♘xe4! (but not 26...gxf5? 27 exf5 ♗xf5 28 ♘xf5!) leads to complex play with roughly equal chances.

24...d5! 25 ♕d4

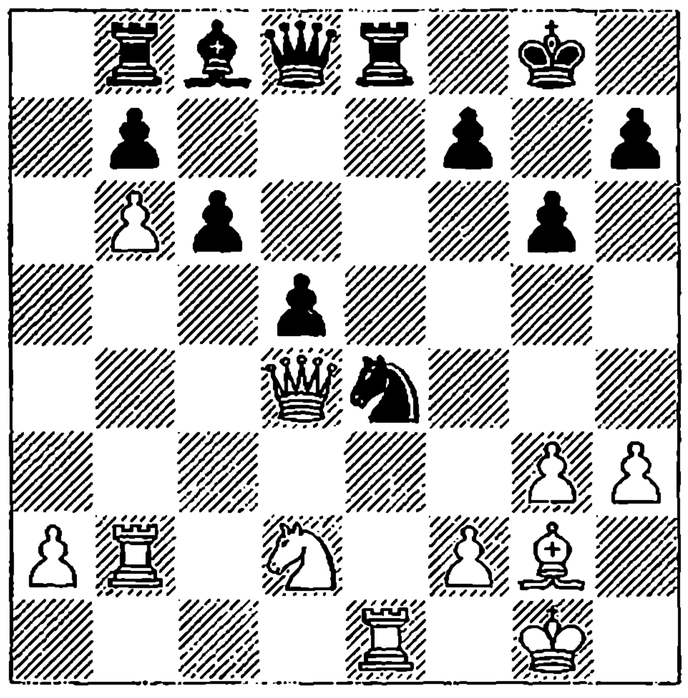
25 exd5 ♖xe1+ 26 ♕xe1 ♘d3 27 dxc6 ♘xe1 28 c7 ♕d1 29 cxb8♕ ♘f3# and 25 ♖d2 ♕e7! can hardly inspire White either.

25...♘xe4

Not 25...♘e6? 26 ♕e5!.

26 ♘d2 *(D)*

B



Now Black is playing with a healthy extra pawn.

26...c5!?

The simple 26...♘xd2 could be better.

27 ♕a4 ♗d7 28 ♕c2 ♘xd2 29 ♖xe8+ ♗xe8 30 ♕xd2 ♗c6 31 ♕f4 ♖a8 32 ♖d2 ♕xb6 33 ♗xd5 ♗xd5 34 ♖xd5 ♖d8!? 35 ♕d2 ♕b1+

Perhaps 35...♖xd5 36 ♕xd5 ♕c7 is stronger, when after 37 ♕c4, even 37...b5!? 38 ♕xb5 c4 39 ♕b1 c3 40 ♕c2 ♕c4 can be considered.

36 ♔h2 ♖xd5 37 ♕xd5 ♕c2 38 ♔g1! b5 39 ♕e5 ♕d1+?

A serious mistake in time-trouble. A sensible path is 39...♕xa2 40 ♕e8+ ♔g7 41 ♕e5+ f6 42 ♕xc5 ♕c4 43 ♕a7+ ♕f7 44 ♕b6 ♕d7.

40 ♔g2

Now Black cannot keep his extra pawn.

40...♕d8

Black is disappointed and wants to finish the game quickly. There were no longer any real winning chances, even after the relatively best 40...♕h5 41 ♕e8+ ♔g7 42 ♕xb5 ♕d5+ 43 ♔f1!.

41 ♕xc5 ♕a8+ 42 ♔g1 ♕xa2 43 ♕xb5 ½-½

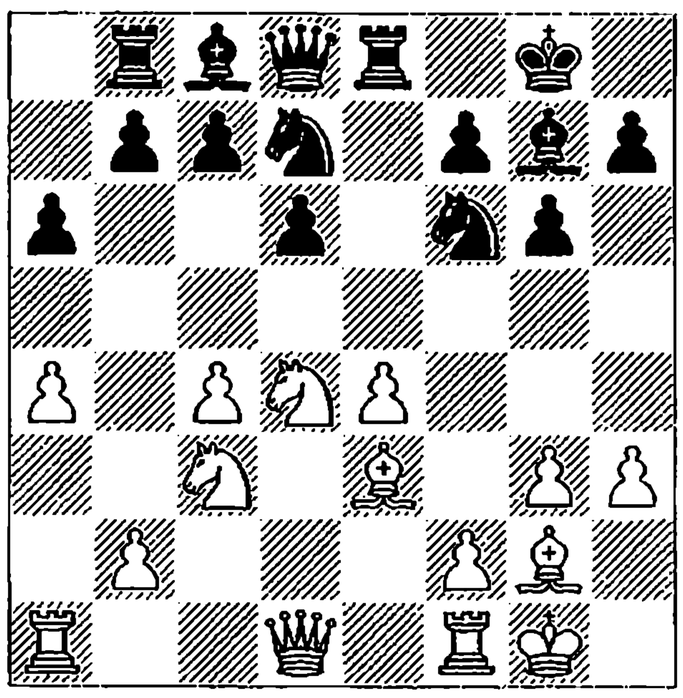
Game 52
Adorjan – Golubev
Alushta 1994

1 ♘f3 ♘f6 2 c4 d6 3 d4 g6 4 g3 ♗g7 5 ♗g2 0-0 6 0-0 ♘bd7 7 ♘c3 e5 8 h3 ♖e8 9 e4 exd4 10 ♘xd4 a6 11 ♗e3

As well as 11 ♖e1, this is a standard and reasonable move.

11...♖b8 12 a4!? *(D)*

B



12...♘e5!?

Alternatively:

a) 12...c6 is rare. 13 ♕c2 (13 a5?! ♘e5! 14 b3 c5! followed by 15...♘c6, attacking White's a5-pawn) 13...a5 14 ♖ad1 ♕e7 (14...♘c5? allows the familiar blow 15 ♘xc6!) 15 ♖fe1 ♘c5 16 f4!? ♘fd7 17 ♗f2 was somewhat better for White in Cvitan-Gallagher, Lenk open 1989.

b) Later I tried 12...♘c5 13 ♕c2 a5 14 ♖fe1 (14 ♖ad1! is more precise, planning 15 ♘db5, while 14...c6? fails to 15 ♘xc6!) 14...♘fd7 (14...c6!?) 15 ♖ad1 (15 ♘db5!? ♘e5) 15...c6 16 ♘b3 ♕b6!? (Black sacrifices the pawn for activity) 17 ♘xc5 ♘xc5! 18 ♖xd6 ♕b4 19 ♖ed1 (19 ♖d2!? and now 19...♘b3?? loses to 20 ♘a2! ♕xa4 21 ♘c1 so Black should choose between the risky 19...♕xc4 and 19...♗e6, when 20 ♘a2!? leads to a slightly better endgame for White) 19...♗e6 20 ♘d5!? (20 ♗xc5 ♕xc5 21 b3 can be met by 21...f5!?, but not 21...b5? 22 axb5 cxb5 23 ♘xb5! ♖xb5 24 ♖6d5) 20...♕xa4! 21 ♕xa4 ♘xa4 22 ♘c7 ♘xb2 23 ♘xe8 ♘xd1 24 ♘xg7 ♘xe3 25 ♘xe6 ♘xg2 and instead of 26 ♘g5? (Itkis-Golubev, Alushta 1997) White can equalize by 26 ♘d4 ♘e1 27 ♔f1 ♘d3 28 ♘b3!.

13 b3 ♗d7

It might not appear pleasant for Black that White can force the retreat of the e5-knight by f4. However, things are not so simple: by playing f4 White not only occupies more space but also weakens e4, while his queenside is already slightly weakened by a4. Thus Black may hope to develop counterplay.

14 a5!?

Or:

a) Adorjan-Groszpeter, Hungarian Ch 1991 continued 14 ♖e1 c5!? (14...♕c8) 15 ♘de2 ♗c6 16 ♕c2 b5 17 cxb5 axb5 18 axb5 ♗xb5 19 ♘xb5 ♖xb5 20 f4 ½-½.

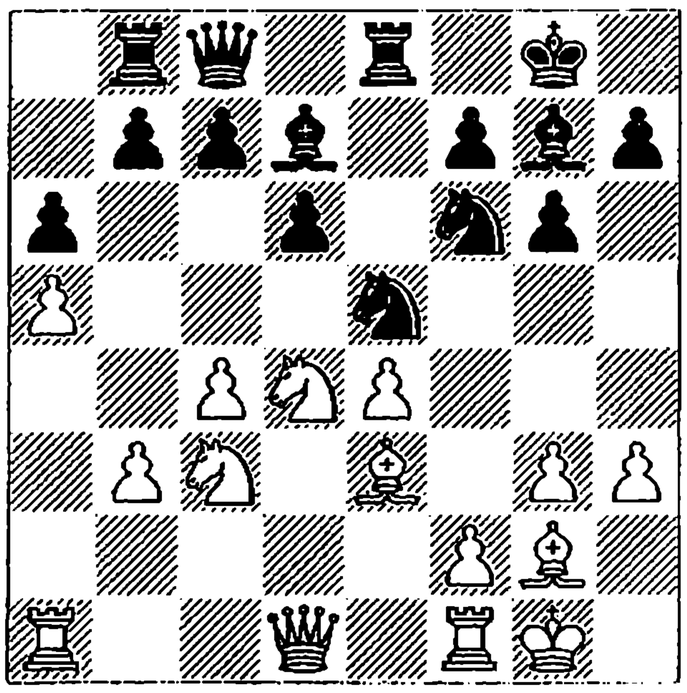
b) After 14 f4 ♘c6 15 ♖e1 it seems that Black equalizes by 15...♘xd4 16 ♗xd4 c5!, as in Suba-Saldano Dayer, Malaga open 2004.

c) 14 ♖a2!? ♕c8 and then:

c1) 15 f4 ♘c6 and here 16 g4 ♘xd4 17 ♗xd4 c5 (Stohl) or 16 ♔h2 h5 17 ♗g1 h4 18 g4 ♘b4! 19 ♖d2 c5 20 ♘de2 ♗c6 with counterplay.

c2) 15 ♔h2 h5 16 ♖d2 (after 16 f3, as in Skembris-Knaak, Athens 1992, 16...h4!? deserves attention: 17 g4 ♗xg4! or 17 gxh4 ♕d8!?) 16...h4 17 gxh4 c5 18 ♘de2 ♗xh3 19 ♗xh3 ♘f3+ 20 ♔g3 ♘h5+ 21 ♔g2 ♘xh4+ with a draw by perpetual check, Ki.Georgiev-Knaak, Dortmund 1991.

14...♕c8 *(D)*



15 ♔h2

15 f4!? ♘c6 16 ♔h2 is interesting; then Black can possibly consider 16...♗f5!? (16...h5 17 ♗g1) 17 ♘xf5 gxf5.

15...h5 16 ♘d5

Now it is too late for 16 f4?? ♘eg4+.

16...h4!?

Now complex and messy play begins. After 16...♘xe4?! 17 ♗xe4 ♗xh3 18 ♗g2 ♘g4+ 19 ♔g1 ♗xg2 20 ♔xg2 c6 21 ♘b6 ♕d8 Black's compensation for the piece might not be really adequate. Perhaps the immediate 16...♘xd5!? is quite good: 17 cxd5 c5 18 dxc6 bxc6 19 f4 c5 (rather than the bizarre 19...h4 20 fxe5 hxg3+) and after 20 ♖c1 ♘c6 21 ♘xc6 ♗xc6 22 ♕xd6 ♗xe4 Black has nothing to worry about.

17 gxh4!?

Both 17 g4 ♘xd5!? 18 cxd5 (18 exd5 ♗xg4!) 18...c5 19 dxc6 bxc6 20 f4 ♗xg4 21 ♕d2 c5 22 ♖ac1 ♕d7 23 ♘c2 ♖xb3 and 17 ♘xf6+ ♗xf6 18 g4 c5! 19 ♘c2 ♗c6 are double-edged.

17...♘xd5 18 cxd5 c5 19 dxc6 bxc6 20 ♘e2

Or 20 h5 c5 21 ♘e2, transposing to the note to White's 21st move.

20...c5

20...♗e6 21 ♖b1 is not too attractive for Black because the e6-bishop might well come under attack by f4-f5.

21 ♘f4?

This normal-looking move is in fact a serious mistake. Of course, 21 ♕xd6? is bad in view of 21...♘f3+ 22 ♗xf3 ♗e5+, but 21 h5! poses some problems for Black, because after 21...gxh5 22 ♘f4! it is White who develops an initiative on the kingside. Therefore 21...♗b5!? is stronger, claiming that Black's activity compensates for the pawn.

21...♕d8! 22 h5

Or 22 ♕xd6 ♕xh4 and White is in serious trouble.

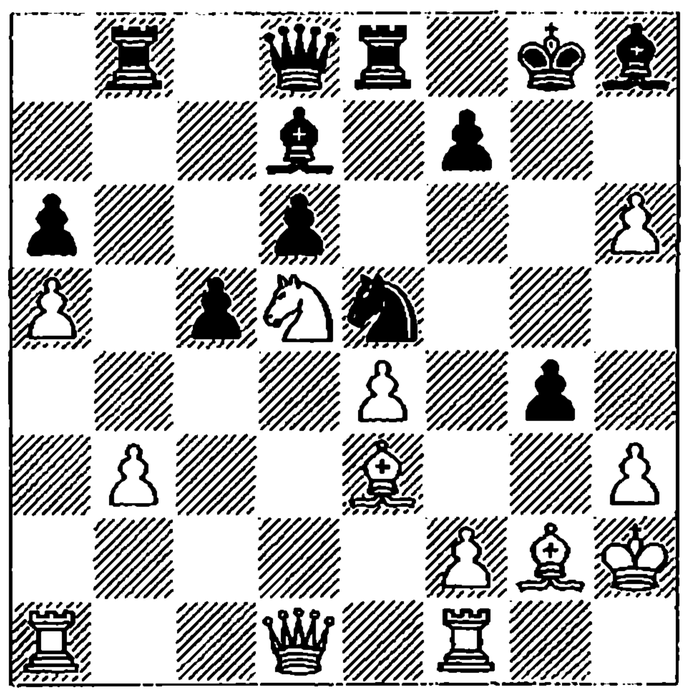
22...g5!

Much better than 22...♕h4?! 23 hxg6 fxg6 24 ♕xd6 g5 25 ♘g6.

23 ♘d5 g4!

White might now begin to regret that he refused to play f4 in the opening...

24 h6 ♗h8 *(D)*



Black's initiative is extremely dangerous. In time-trouble, White goes down quickly.

25 ♖h1?!

After 25 hxg4 ♘xg4+ 26 ♔g1 ♕h4 27 ♗f4 ♗e5 28 ♕f3 Black attacks by 28...♖xb3! 29 ♕xb3 ♗xf4 30 ♗h3 ♗h2+!.

25...♕h4 26 ♕d2? ♖xb3 27 h7+ ♕xh7 28 ♗g5 ♖xh3+ 0-1

Before the start of the Alushta tournament, Andras Adorjan proposed to play all his games with Black. After some reflection, the other participants refused to support the idea. In the end, all three non-drawn games involving Adorjan were won by Black.

Game 53
Borovikov – Golubev
Nikolaev Z 1993

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 d6 3 c4 g6 4 g3 ♗g7 5 ♗g2 0-0 6 0-0 ♘bd7 7 ♘c3 e5 8 h3 ♖e8 9 e4 exd4 10 ♘xd4 a6 11 ♗e3 ♖b8

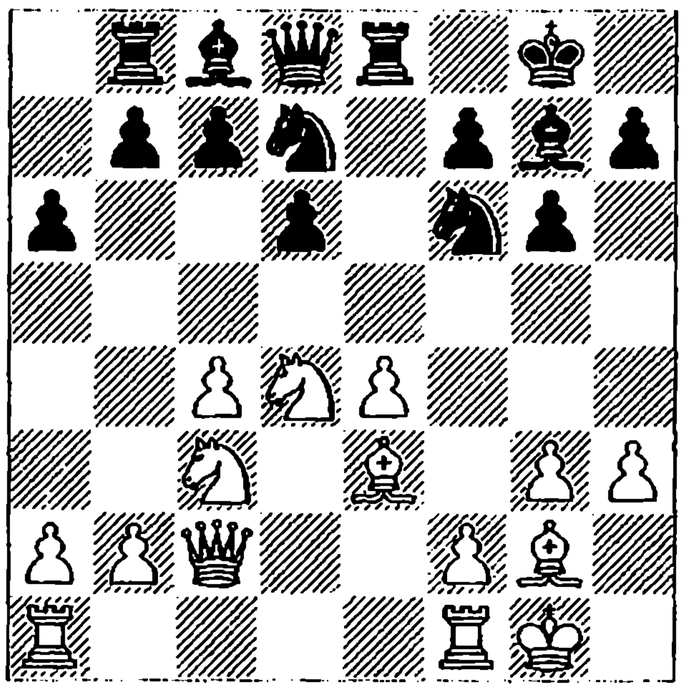
Note that 11...♘e5?! is premature. After 12 b3 c5 13 ♘de2 ♖b8, Borovikov-Tukmakov, Nikolaev Z 1993 continued 14 f4! ♘c6 15 ♕d2 ♕e7 16 ♗f2! with a big advantage.

12 ♕c2 *(D)*

A solid but innocuous move: now Black can accomplish his plan of queenside expansion without obstacles.

I faced 12 ♖c1!? on one occasion. 12...c5 13 ♘de2 ♘e5!? (safer is 13...b5 14 cxb5 axb5 15 ♕xd6 b4 16 ♘a4 ♗f8 17 ♕d3 ♕a5 with full compensation for the pawn, Szekely-Gallagher, Hastings Challengers 1990/1) 14 b3 b5 15 f4 ♘ed7 16 ♕xd6 b4 17 ♘d5?! (17 e5! bxc3 18 ♘xc3 ♘h5 19 g4 ♗f8 20 ♕d2 ♘g7 21 ♘e4 is correct, with two pawns and the initiative for the piece, Pigusov-Remlinger, Philadelphia open 1994) 17...♘xe4 18 ♗xe4 (18 ♕c7 ♘xg3!) 18...♖xe4 19 ♖cd1? (a blunder in a dubious position) 19...♖e6! and Black won in Menschner-Golubev, Schwäbisch Gmünd open 1994.

B



12...c5

Also of interest is 12...♘e5!? 13 b3 c5 14 ♘de2 b5, when 15 cxb5 axb5 16 f4?! ♘ed7 17 e5 dxe5 18 fxe5 ♘xe5 19 ♗xc5 b4 was good for Black in Galliamova-Peng Zhaoqin, Subotica wom IZ 1991.

13 ♘dc2 b5 14 ♖ad1 ♕e7

14...b4!? 15 ♘d5 ♘xd5 16 ♖xd5 ♕e7 17 ♖fd1 ♖b6 is a playable alternative, Baginskaite-Domkute, Moscow 1990.

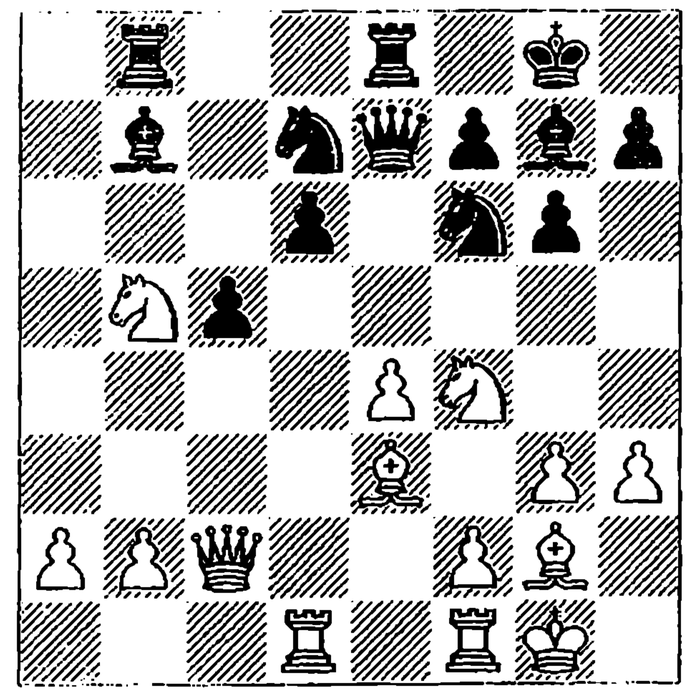
15 cxb5

Black has sufficient counterchances after other moves too: 15 ♗f4 ♘e5 16 cxb5 axb5 17 ♗g5 ♕f8!, Draško-Gallagher, Aosta open 1990, or 15 ♗g5 bxc4 16 ♕d2 ♘e5 17 ♕xd6 ♕xd6 18 ♖xd6 ♘fd7, D.Fridman-Forster, Sas van Gent jr Ech 1992.

15...axb5 16 ♘f4 ♗b7! 17 ♘xb5 *(D)*

Black is also OK after 17 ♘cd5 ♗xd5 18 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 19 ♖xd5 ♘f6 20 ♗g5 ♕e6 or 17 ♖fe1 ♘b6! – Reinderman.

B



17...♗xe4!

Borovikov-Reinderman, Sas van Gent jr Ech 1992 saw 17...♘xe4?! 18 ♘c7 ♘xg3 19 ♘cd5 ♗xd5 20 ♘xd5 ♕e5 21 fxg3 ♖xb2 22 ♕a4? (a mistake: both 22 ♕c1 ♕xg3 23 ♗f2! and 22 ♕d3 ♕xg3 23 ♖d2! seem to favour White) 22...♘b6! with good chances for Black.

18 ♗xe4 ♘xe4 19 ♘d5 ♕e6!

More ambitious than 19...♕e5, when White can at least force a transition to an equal endgame by 20 ♗f4 ♕xb2 21 ♕xb2 ♗xb2 22 ♘xd6 ♘xd6 23 ♗xd6 ♖b7 (Dautov).

20 ♘bc7 ♕xh3 21 ♘xe8 ♖xe8 22 ♖fe1 ♕f5

Threatening 23...♘e5.

23 ♗g5?!

Tempting, but wrong. Stronger is 23 ♗f4 ♗d4 24 ♖xd4 cxd4 25 ♘c7? (25 ♕c6! is correct, when 25...g5 {25...d3 26 ♘c3 d2 27 ♖e2 is double-edged} reaches the same position as in the game after Black's 27th move) 25...♖e7 26 ♕c6 g5 27 ♘d5 ♖e8? (missing an opportunity to win by 27...♖e6! 28 ♘c7 ♖e5 29 f3 gxf4 30 g4 ♕f6 31 ♖xe4 ♕h4 32 ♕a8+ ♔g7 33 ♘e8+ ♔h6) 28 f3! gxf4 29 g4! ♕g5 30 ♕xd7 (Schroll-Van Wely, Kecskemet 1991) and here Black should play 30...♖e5! with an almost inevitable draw in all lines.

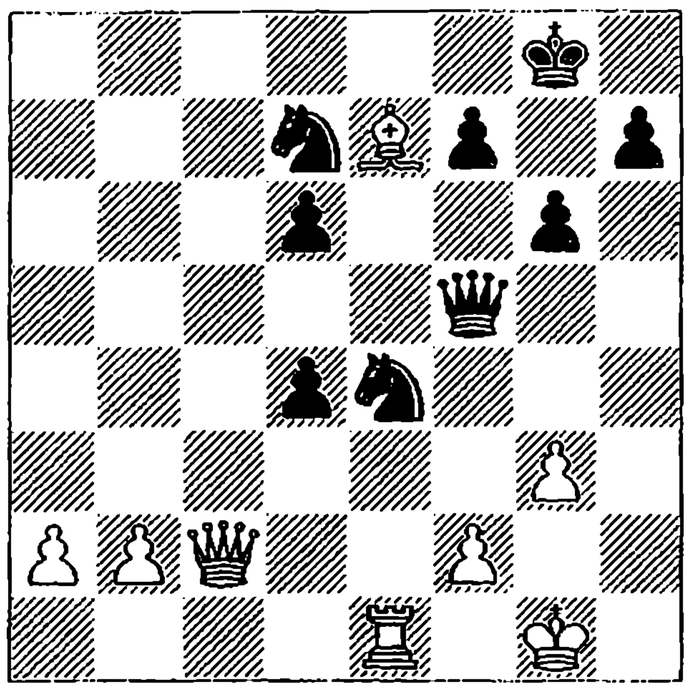
23...♗d4! 24 ♖xd4 cxd4 25 ♘e7+ ♖xe7 26 ♗xe7 *(D)*

26...♘dc5!

An important move, after which Black's pieces become nicely coordinated. Worse is 26...d3? 27 ♕c8+ ♔g7, when White can secure a draw with 28 ♖xe4 ♕xe4 29 ♕xd7 or play for a win by 28 ♗f8+!? ♘xf8 29 ♕xf5 gxf5 30 ♖d1 with the idea 30...d2 31 f3 ♘xg3 32 ♖xd2. A rook can often be stronger than two knights in such sharp endings.

27 b4?

B



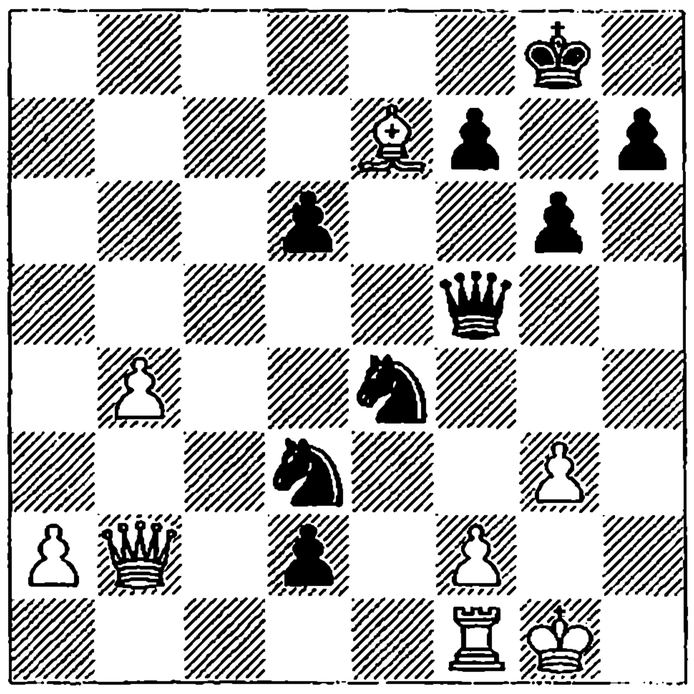
A decisive mistake. However, Black's prospects were already better:

a) 27 ♖f1 d3 28 ♕c4 (or 28 ♕d1 ♕e5 29 b4 ♘c3 30 ♗xd6 ♕d5! 31 ♕g4 ♘e6 32 ♗f4 h5 – Dautov) 28...h5!? (not 28...♘d2? 29 ♕b4!) 29 **b4** ♘d2 30 ♕f4 ♕xf4 31 gxf4 ♘xf1 32 ♔xf1 ♘e4 33 a4 ♘c3 34 ♔e1 ♘xa4 35 ♔d2 f5 36 ♔xd3 ♔f7.

b) 27 ♕e2 d3 28 ♕e3 ♕h5!? (28...♕g4?! 29 b4! d2 30 bxc5 dxc5 allows White to equalize by 31 ♗xc5!) 29 b4 d2 30 bxc5 ♘xg3!! (a remarkable blow) 31 ♔g2 (31 fxg3? ♕xc5! and White can resign) 31...dxe1♕ 32 ♕xe1 ♘f5 33 ♗xd6 (33 cxd6 is not better) 33...♘xd6 34 cxd6 ♕d5+, getting an extra pawn in a queen endgame.

27...d3 28 ♕b2 d2 29 ♖f1 ♘d3 *(D)*

W



30 ♕a3

White cannot allow Black to capture on f2 with the knight.

30...♕d5!

The only but sufficient defence against the threats of 31 ♕xd3 and 31 ♕a8+. Now Black dominates.

31 ♕a7

31 ♕a4 h6 does not change much.

31...h6 32 f3 ♘xg3 33 ♗f6 ♘e2+ 34 ♔g2 ♘e1+ 35 ♖xe1

35 ♔f2 ♕xf3#.

35...♘f4+ 36 ♔h2 ♕h5+! 0-1

I was definitely happy with this victory over the first champion of independent Ukraine, who loses with White once in a blue moon.

Game 54
Borovikov – Golubev
Ukrainian Ch (Ordzhonikidze) 2001

Finally, the game where, in the words of IM John Donaldson from *JeremySilman.com*, "the Ukrainian GM Borovikov put an end to the old Gallagher variation".

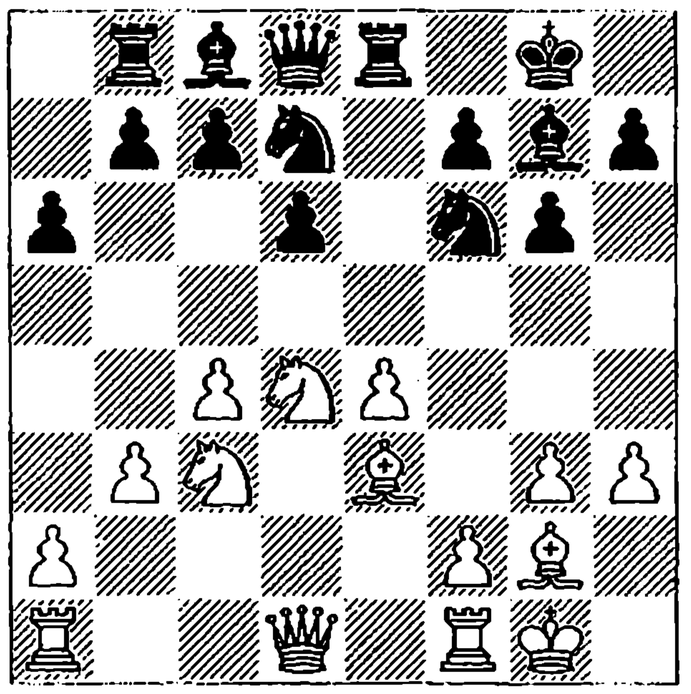
Well, things are not so dramatic, but Vladislav indeed managed to deliver a serious blow to Gallagher's idea – and also to take convincing revenge for his loss in our 1993 encounter.

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 g6 3 c4 ♗g7 4 g3 0-0 5 ♗g2 d6 6 0-0 ♘bd7 7 ♘c3 e5 8 e4 exd4 9 ♘xd4 ♖e8 10 h3 a6 11 ♗e3 ♖b8

Prior to this game, my score in this position was 4/4, but it was quite unprofessional not to appreciate that the opponent has something in mind...

12 b3! *(D)*

B



Quite a logical move, one can say. However, it was used by White so seldom until 2001, that I had no inclination to devote any special attention to it.

12...c5

Since 12...♘e5 does not make much sense here (the c4-pawn is protected), this is the only 'principled' continuation, in the original spirit of the variation. Alas, when playing versus

Borovikov, I was not familiar with the important game S.Williams-Gallagher, which was played 40 days earlier at the British Championship. On the other hand, as we shall see, Borovikov's home preparation lasted until move 35 in some lines! The alternatives are:

a) 12...♘c5 13 ♕c2 ♕e7 (or 13...♗d7 14 b4 ♘e6 15 ♘b3 with some pressure for White, Avrukh-Arizmendi, Biel open 2003) 14 ♖fe1! ♘fxe4 15 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 16 ♗xe4 ♕xe4 17 ♗d2 ♕xe1+ 18 ♖xe1 ♖xe1+ 19 ♗xe1 ♗xd4 resulted in a typically better endgame for White in Ruck-L.Vajda, Gyula (Perenyi mem) 2000, although after 20 ♕e4 ♗e5 21 f4 ♗f5 22 ♕e3 ♗f6 23 g4 ♗d7 24 ♗c3 ♖e8 25 ♕d3 ♗xc3 26 ♕xc3 Black missed 26...f5!? with chances for survival.

b) 12...♕e7!? (a fresh idea) 13 a4 (playable for Black is 13 ♖e1 c5! 14 ♘de2 b5 15 cxb5 axb5 16 ♘f4 and now 16...♕f8 {Ruck-L.Vajda, Hungarian Cht 2002/3} or 16...b4!? – Gallagher) 13...c5 (13...♘c5!?) 14 ♘de2 b6 15 ♖a2 ♗b7 16 f3 ♘e5 17 ♖d2 ♖bd8 18 ♕c1 h6 19 ♖fd1 ♔h7 20 g4 ♕c7 21 ♗f2 ♕e7 22 ♘g3 ♘c6 23 f4 ♕c7 24 ♔h1 ♕b8 25 ♗g1 ♔g8 and in Khuzman-Gallagher, Calvia OL 2004 the players agreed to a draw. Only White can try to play for a win in the final position, but it seems he did not find any good plan.

13 ♘de2 b5

This advance seems to be more or less unplayable as of now. The calmer 13...♕c7 14 a4 b6! 15 ♖a2 ♗b7 16 f3 ♖bd8 17 ♖d2 ♘e5 does not look bad for Black, Shengelia-R.Mamedov, Batumi open 2003.

14 ♕xd6!

Under these circumstances, this is much stronger than 14 cxb5 axb5 15 ♕xd6 b4.

14...b4 15 ♘a4 *(D)*

15 e5?! is unconvincing due to the reply 15...♘h5!.

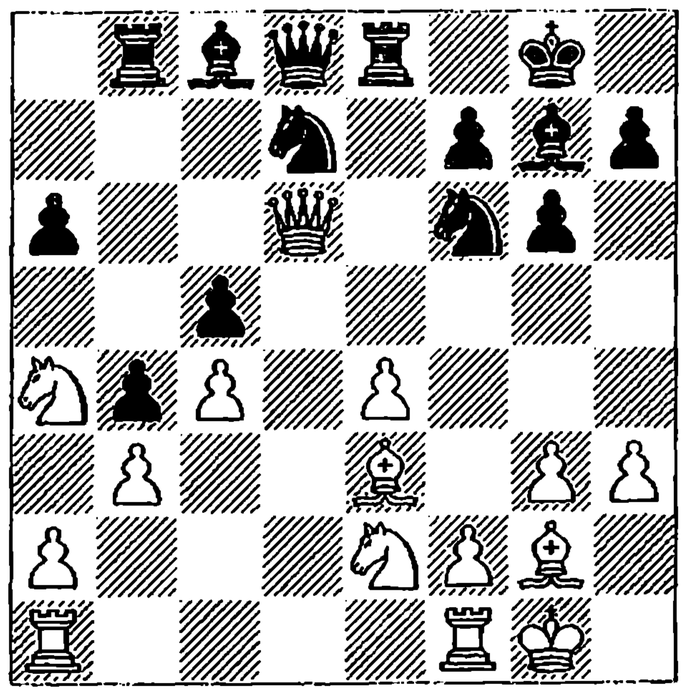
15...♘xe4

After 15...♗b7?! White obtains the advantage by 16 ♖ad1! (16 f3 allows 16...♘d5! 17 cxd5 ♗e5 trapping the queen, but 16 ♘xc5!? is possible).

16 ♗xe4 ♖xe4

16...♗xa1?! 17 ♖xa1 ♖xe4 is insufficient due to 18 ♘xc5 ♖e8 (18...♖xe3?! 19 fxe3 ♕e8 20 e4! ♖b6 21 ♕c7 ♖f6 22 ♖d1! ♘f8 23 ♖d8 ♖c6 24 ♖xe8 ♖xc7 25 ♘d3 and White soon won in J.Horvath-Berthelot, Cannes open 1992) 19 ♖d1 ♕e7 20 ♕xe7! (better than 20 ♘xd7 ♗xd7 with the idea 21 ♕xd7? ♖bd8 or 20 ♕c7 ♘xc5 21 ♕xb8, when Black has compensation for the pawn after, e.g., 21...♗b7) 20...♖xe7 21 ♘f4 (Kiss-Tratar, Austrian Cht 1996/7) with a clear advantage for White because 21...♖xe3? fails to 22 ♘xd7.

B



17 ♖ad1!

Untested is 17 ♘xc5!? ♗f8 (possibly strongest; in any case, 17...♖xe3?! 18 fxe3 ♗f8 19 ♘e6!? cannot suit Black) with rather unclear play after 18 ♕xb8 (or 18 ♘xe4 ♗xd6 19 ♘xd6 ♘e5!) 18...♘xb8 19 ♘xe4 ♕e7 20 f3 ♗xh3 21 ♖fd1 ♗g7!? 22 ♗c5 ♕e8 and so on.

17...♕e8

Not 17...♕f8?! 18 ♘xc5 ♕xd6 19 ♖xd6 ♖xe3 20 ♘xd7 ♖xe2 21 ♘xb8, winning.

18 ♘xc5!

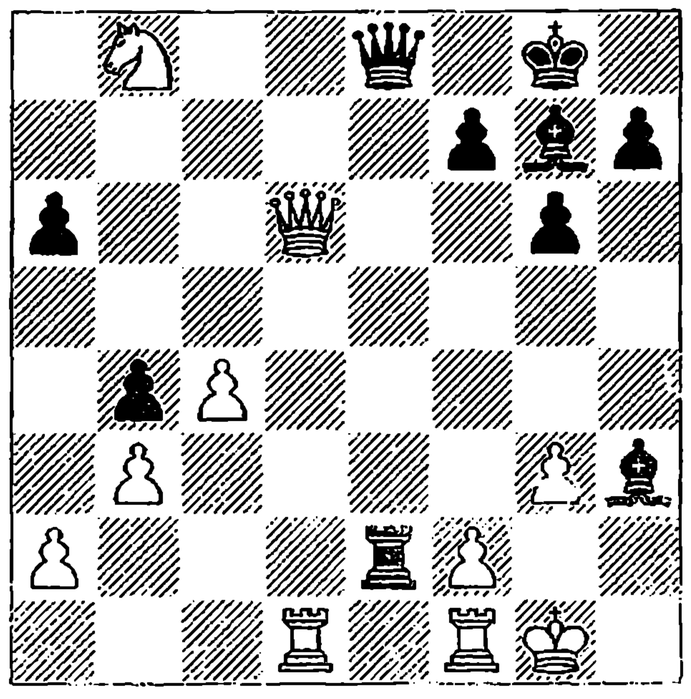
This is Williams's important novelty. In several earlier games 18 ♘f4 ♗f8!, with double-edged play, was tested.

18...♖xe3 19 ♘xd7! ♖xe2

It is very unlikely that Black gets sufficient compensation for the exchange after 19...♗xd7 20 fxe3 ♗xh3 21 ♖f2.

20 ♘xb8 ♗xh3 *(D)*

W



21 ♕b6!

I had no clue about this during the play, but White's 21st move was an important improvement over S.Williams-Gallagher, British Ch (Scarborough) 2001, which went 21 ♘d7 ♗xf1 22 ♘f6+ (not 22 ♔xf1? ♖xa2 23 ♖e1 ♕a8!, as pointed out by A.Martin) 22...♗xf6 23 ♕xf6 ♖e1! (the rook endgame after 23...♖e6 24 ♖d8 ♖xf6 25 ♖xe8+ ♔g7 26 ♔xf1 is difficult for Black) 24 ♖d8 ♗xc4+ 25 ♔h2 and here Black could have easily secured a draw by 25...♗b5!.

After 21 ♕d8 ♗xf1 22 ♔xf1 Black holds by 22...♖e1+ 23 ♔g2 ♗f8! with the idea 24 ♕xe8 ♖xe8 25 ♘xa6 ♖a8, regaining the pawn.

21...♗f8

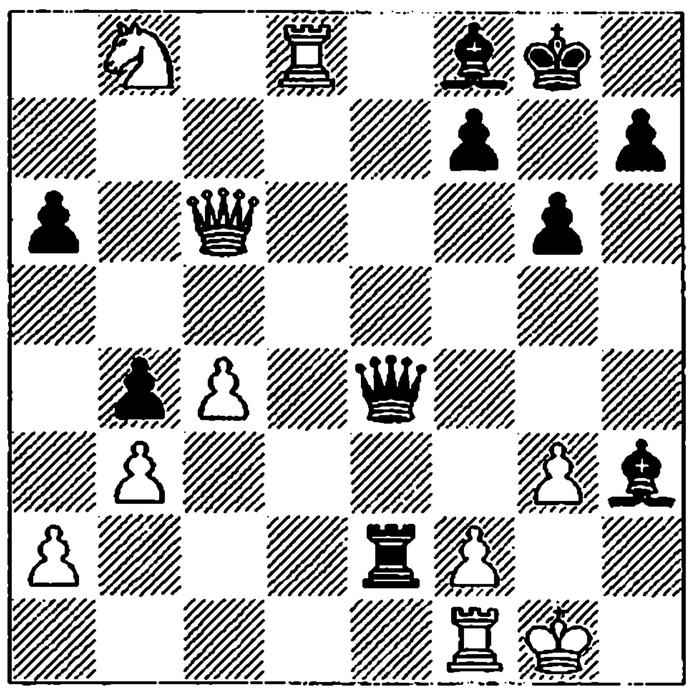
21...♕e4 22 ♖d8+ ♗f8 comes to the same thing.

22 ♖d8 ♕e4

22...♕e7?! is, unfortunately, very nicely refuted by 23 ♕d4!! (not 23 ♘c6?? ♕e4 24 f3 ♖g2+ 25 ♔h1 ♕e2 or 23 ♖fd1?! ♕e4 24 ♕c6 ♕f5!) 23...♕b7 (the point is 23...♗xf1 24 ♘c6! and all 'normal' moves by the queen allow 25 ♖xf8+ and 26 ♕h8#, so 24...♕xd8 is forced, and White is technically winning after 25 ♕xd8) 24 ♕d5 ♕xd5 25 cxd5 with a great advantage for White.

23 ♕c6 *(D)*

B



23...♕xc6

23...♗xf1?! 24 ♕xe4 ♖xe4 25 ♔xf1 ♔g7 26 ♘xa6 appears to be hopeless for Black.

But it would have been a good idea to test Borovikov's preparation by 23...♕e7!? 24 ♖fd1! ♗g4 *(D)*, when White has a mass of options:

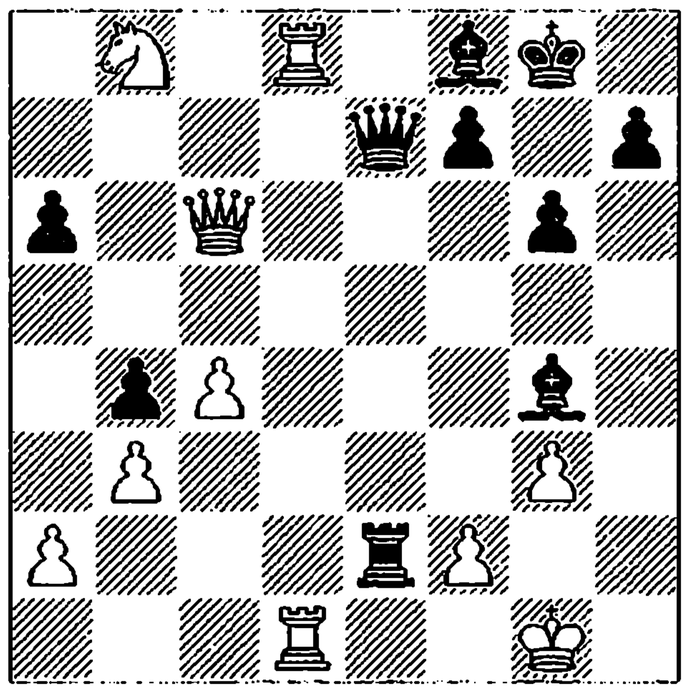
a) 25 ♕a8 ♔g7 and it is not easy to find a clear-cut way for White to secure an advantage.

b) 25 ♘d7 leads to a queen vs rook + bishop endgame: 25...♕xd8 26 ♘f6+ ♕xf6 27 ♕xf6 ♖e6! 28 ♕d8 ♗xd1 29 ♕xd1 and Black creates a kind of fortress by 29...♖e5!. I did not find a way for White to win against careful defence: 30 ♕d4 ♖f5! 31 g4 ♖c5 32 f3 a5 33 ♕f6 h5 34 ♔f2 ♗g7 35 ♕d8+ ♗f8 36 ♔e3 ♔g7! 37 ♔d4 f6!, and an interesting, but insufficient attempt here is 38 ♕xf8+!? ♔xf8 39 ♔xc5 h4 40 ♔b6! h3 41 c5 h2 42 c6 h1♕ 43 c7 ♕c1!? 44 ♔b7 ♔e7 45 c8♕ ♕xc8+ 46 ♔xc8 ♔d6 47 ♔b7 ♔e5 48 ♔b6 ♔f4 49 ♔xa5 ♔xf3 50 ♔xb4 ♔xg4 51 a4 f5 52 a5 f4 53 a6 f3 54 a7 f2 55 a8♕ f1♕ with a dead draw.

c) 25 ♕d6!? ♕xd6 (25...♖e1+? 26 ♖xe1 ♕xe1+ 27 ♔g2 ♗h3+ is refuted by 28 ♔h2!! ♕xf2+ 29 ♔xh3 ♕f1+ 30 ♔h4! ♕h1+ 31 ♔g5! and the white king will escape the checks) 26 ♖1xd6 ♗f3 27 ♖d1 ♖xa2 28 ♖e1 ♔g7 29 ♘d7, and now 29...♗d6!? 30 c5 ♗e7 is a computer suggestion, which I refused even to consider when I analysed the game in 2001. It looks completely illogical to provoke c5! But in fact after 31 ♖e8 ♗g5 32 ♘e5 ♗d5 (that is why Black needed to provoke the advance of the c-pawn) White's chances for a win are rather vague: 33 f4!? (hardly better is 33 c6 ♖c2 34 ♘d3 ♗xc6 35 ♘xb4) 33...♗f6 34 ♖c1 ♖g2+ 35 ♔f1 ♖h2 36 ♔e1 h5! 37 c6! ♖h1+ 38 ♔d2 ♖xc1 39 ♔xc1 ♗xe5 and 40...♗xc6.

d) 25 ♕d5!? (threatening 26 ♘c6) 25...♖xa2! 26 ♖f1 (26 ♘c6?! ♕e2; 26 ♕d6 ♕xd6 27 ♖1xd6 ♔g7) 26...♕f6 (not 26...♗f3? 27 ♘c6! ♕e2 28 ♕d4! ♗xc6 29 ♕c5 ♗e8 30 ♕c8 or 26...♗h3? 27 ♕d4!! and now 27...♕e2 28 ♖d1 or 27...♕b7 28 ♖xf8+ ♔xf8 29 ♕h8+ ♔e7 30 ♖e1+! ♗e6 31 ♖d1!) 27 ♘c6 ♔g7 28 ♕d4 ♕xd4 29 ♘xd4 looks good for White, whose knight is placed optimally. Possibly Black should seek drawing chances by 29...♗c5 30 ♖d5 ♗xd4 31 ♖xd4 ♗f5 32 c5 ♖c2 (32...a5? 33

W

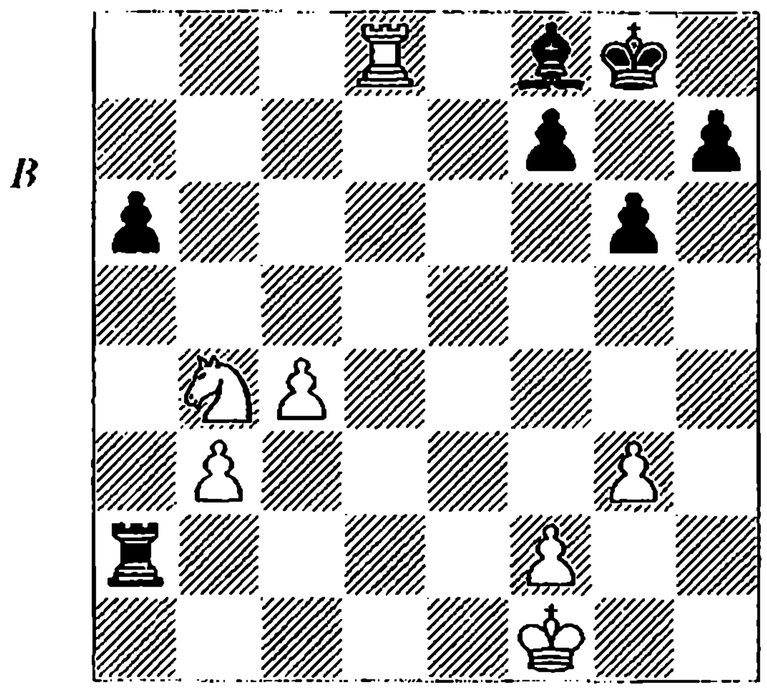


♖c1!) 33 ♖a1 (or 33 ♖xb4 ♗d3!?) 33...♖xc5 34 ♖xa6 ♗e6 35 ♖xb4 ♖c1+.

24 ♘xc6 ♗xf1 25 ♔xf1 ♖xa2

The clever 25...♖b2!? can be answered by 26 ♘e5!? (Black's idea is 26 ♘xb4 a5 27 ♘d5 ♔g7 28 ♖a8 ♖xa2 29 b4 ♖c2) 26...♔g7 27 ♘d7! (rather than 27 ♖d7 ♔f6 28 f4 ♔e6 29 ♖xf7 ♗d6) 27...♗e7 28 ♖c8 with a clear advantage.

26 ♘xb4 *(D)*



B

This was a position that Vladislav had prepared at home with a computer, while I had used one hour and 45 minutes reaching it! Materially speaking, Black is feeling well, but his bishop is pinned and White's c-pawn is extremely dangerous.

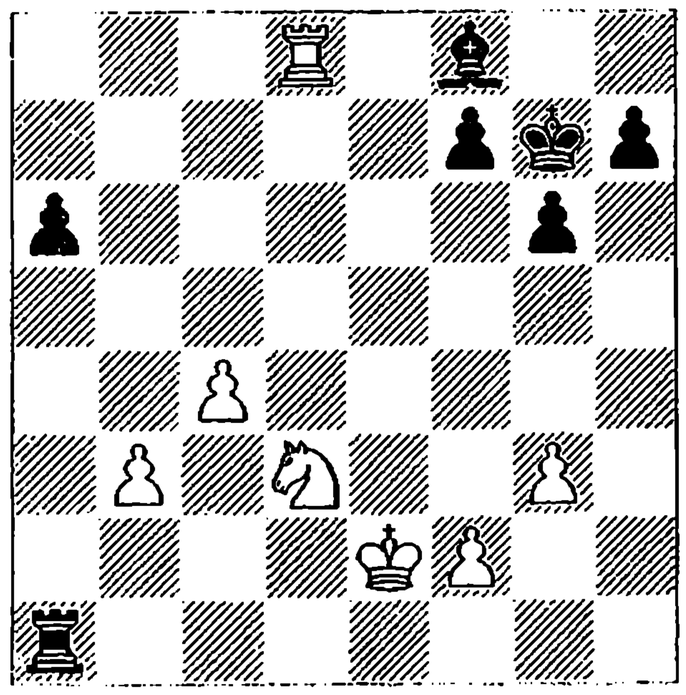
26...♖a1+

26...♖a3 27 c5! ♔g7 (after 27...♖xb3? 28 ♘d5! the c5-pawn will cost Black a rook: 28...♖b1+ 29 ♔e2 ♖c1 30 c6 ♖xc6 31 ♘e7+ ♔g7 32 ♘xc6) 28 c6 ♖a1+ (or 28...♗xb4 29 c7 ♗a5 30 c8♕ ♗xd8 31 ♕xd8 ♖xb3 and Black will hardly be able to create a fortress here: if he wishes, White can begin with 32 g4!?, preventing ...h5) 29 ♔e2 ♗xb4 (29...♖c1 30 ♔d2! ♖c5 31 ♖d5! was still Borovikov's preparation: White wins after 31...♖a5 32 ♘d3 ♖xd5 33 c7) 30 c7 ♖c1 31 c8♕ ♖xc8 32 ♖xc8 h5 with a difficult, most likely losing endgame for Black. 26...♖b2 is similar to 26...♖a3: White plays 27 c5!.

27 ♔e2 ♔g7

After 27...a5 28 ♘d3 ♖b1 29 ♖b8 (29 ♔d2!? ♖xb3 30 ♘c5 is also possible) 29...a4 30 b4 a3 31 ♖a8 a2 32 ♖xa2 ♗xb4 33 c5 ♖b3 34 c6 ♗d6 35 ♖a8+ ♔g7 36 ♖d8 ♗b8 37 ♘c5! the c6-pawn will cost Black his bishop.

28 ♘d3! *(D)*



B

Now the black rook is very much restricted in its mobility, which seems to be fatal. As I found out recently, all this was demonstrated by journalist John Henderson in his *TWIC* report on the 2001 British Championship.

28...♖b1?!

Similarly bad is 28...a5?! 29 c5 a4 30 b4 a3 31 ♖a8, etc. My last chance was 28...♗e7, trying to activate the king by ...♔f6.

29 ♖b8 a5 30 c5! a4 31 b4

31 c6 ♗d6 32 ♖d8 ♗c7 33 ♖d7 a3 34 ♖xc7 a2 35 ♖a7 a1♕ 36 ♖xa1 ♖xa1 37 c7 ♖a8 38 ♘f4 wins as well.

31...♗xc5!?

This allows Black to prolong the game, but that is all. After 31...a3 32 ♖a8 ♖a1 33 b5!? White's connected passed pawns decide.

32 ♘xc5 a3 33 ♖a8 ♖xb4 34 ♖xa3 h5 35 ♘d3

White's straightforward winning plan is to place his knight on e5 and the rook on the seventh rank.

35...♖b7 36 ♘f4 ♖e7+ 37 ♔f3 ♖d7 38 ♖d3 ♖e7 39 ♖d6 ♖e5 40 ♖d7 ♔f6 41 ♖a7 ♔g7 42 ♘d3 ♖e6 43 ♔f4 ♖e2 44 f3 ♔f6

The last trick – Black is threatening mate in one.

45 ♖a6+ ♔g7 46 ♘e5! g5+ 47 ♔f5 h4 48 gxh4 gxh4 49 ♖a7 h3 50 ♖xf7+ ♔g8 51 ♖f6 ♔g7 52 ♖g6+ ♔h7 1-0

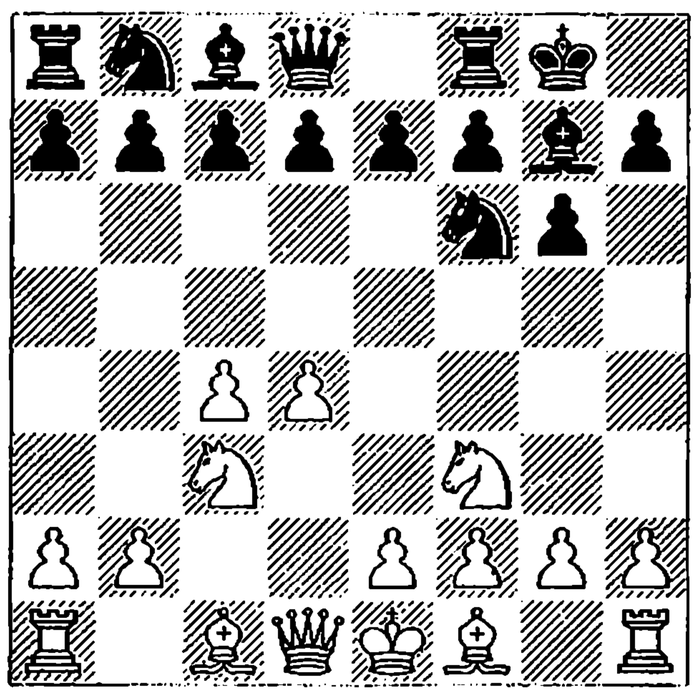
12 Early ♗f4 or ♗g5

In this final chapter, lines with an early ♗f4 and ♗g5 will be briefly covered. Certainly, these deviations are far from critical tests of the King's Indian. However, they should not be taken too lightly – either during the game or in preparation. In an attempt to illustrate that a player's attitude to the game matters more than his opponent's opening choice, I decided to include in this small chapter two of my losses. After all, as readers will by now understand, it has certainly not been my intention in this book to hide my mistakes (and instructive mistakes, especially).

Game 55
Moskalenko – Golubev
Alushta 1994

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 ♘f3 0-0 *(D)*

W



5 ♗f4

An obviously unambitious line is 5 e3 d6, and now:

a) 6 h3 ♘bd7 7 ♗e2 e5 8 ♕c2 ♖e8 9 b3 exd4 10 exd4 b6!? 11 0-0 ♗b7 12 ♗b2 ♘h5 13 ♕d2 ♕f6 14 d5 ♘f4 15 ♖fe1 ♘e5! 16 ♘xe5? ♕g5! and Black won the queen in Habibi-Golubev, Swiss open Ch (Graechen) 1999.

b) 6 ♗d3 ♖e8 7 0-0 e5 8 ♗c2 ♘bd7 9 b3 exd4 10 exd4 ♘f8 11 h3 c6 12 ♗e3 ♕a5 13 ♗d2 ♗f5 14 ♘e4 ♕d8 15 ♘g3 ♗xc2 16 ♕xc2 ♘e6 17 ♖ad1 d5 ½-½ D.Berkovich-Golubev, Novaya Kachovka 1988.

c) 6 ♗e2 ♘bd7 7 ♕c2 e5 8 0-0 ♖e8 (in fact, this is a 1 e4 e6 2 d3 system with reversed colours) 9 b3 exd4 (the most ambitious line is 9...e4!? 10 ♘d2 ♕e7 as played by Euwe, Gufeld, Nunn...) 10 ♘xd4 ♘c5 11 ♗b2 a5 12 h3 c6 13 ♗f3 ♕b6 14 ♖ad1 h5 15 ♖fe1 a4 16 ♘ce2 ♗d7 with good counterplay, D.Nitsche-Golubev, Bad Wiessee open 1999.

5...d6

5...d5!? transposes to the Grünfeld Defence. After 5...c5, 6 e3 cxd4 7 exd4 d5! does not look attractive for White, so he should play 6 d5!.

6 e3 c6 7 h3 a6

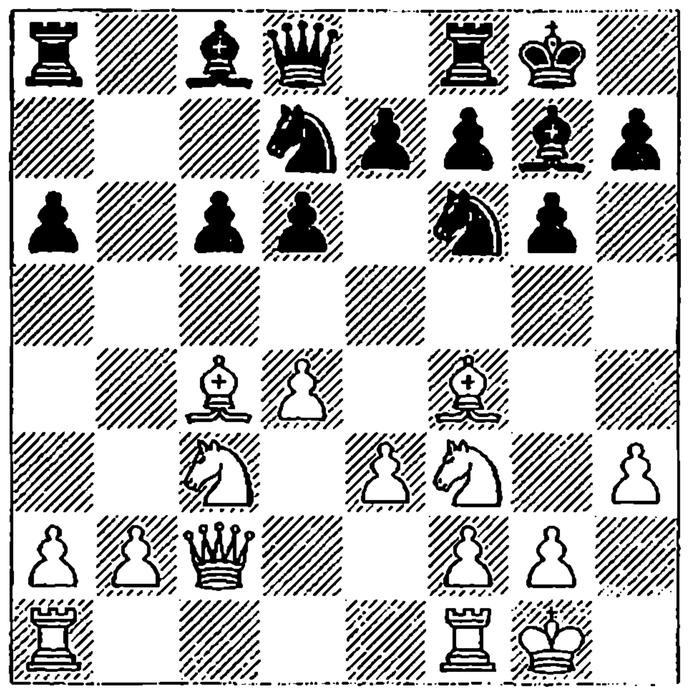
The plan with ...a6 and ...c6 is a reasonable practical choice for Black in both ♗f4 and ♗g5 systems. However, plans involving an early ...c5, which requires more concrete preparation, are perhaps the most principled course.

8 ♗e2 b5 9 0-0 ♘bd7 10 ♕c2

10 ♖c1 bxc4!? 11 ♗xc4 c5 12 d5 ♘b6 13 ♗b3 (13 ♗e2!? is probably better) 13...a5 14 a4 ♗a6 15 ♖e1 ♖b8 16 e4 c4 17 ♗a2 ♘bd7 18 ♖c2 ♘c5 19 e5 ♘h5 20 ♗h2 ♘d3 with an initiative for Black, Sumets-Golubev, *Odesskie Izvestia* blitz 2001. White can be advised to choose 10 b3, which Black can answer by 10...♗b7!?, with a playable position.

10...bxc4!? 11 ♗xc4 *(D)*

B



11...c5!

I like this method of undermining White's centre.

12 d5

Black is also OK after 12 dxc5 ♘xc5 or 12 ♖fd1 cxd4 13 ♘xd4 ♗b7 (13...e5? 14 ♘c6!).

12...♘b6 13 b3?

White underestimates the danger. 13 ♘d2! is correct, with chances for both sides.

13...♘h5! 14 ♗h2

After 14 ♗g5 Black, at least, has 14...h6!? 15 ♗h4 g5 16 ♗g3 g4 17 hxg4 ♘xg3 18 fxg3 ♗xg4.

14...♗f5! 15 ♕d2

15 e4 loses material after 15...♗xc3.

15...♗xc3!

After 15...♘xc4 16 bxc4 ♘f6 Black cannot be worse, but he is already fighting for the advantage.

16 ♕xc3 ♗e4! 17 ♖ad1 ♘f6

Completing the operation. White's d5-pawn is now lost. An interesting alternative continuation was 17...♗xf3!? 18 gxf3 f5 (I.Belov).

18 ♘g5?!

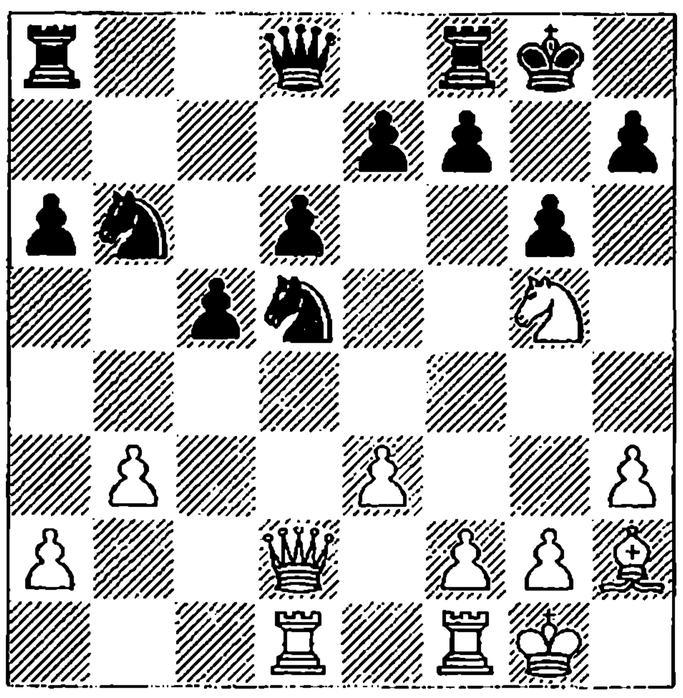
Stronger is 18 ♘d2! ♗xd5 19 ♗d3! followed by e4 with probably sufficient compensation for the pawn.

18...♗xd5 19 ♗xd5 ♘fxd5!

Better than 19...♘bxd5 20 ♕c4!? with the possible continuation 20...h6 21 ♘f3 ♘b6 22 ♕h4 ♔g7 23 e4 g5 24 ♘xg5 hxg5 25 ♕xg5+ ♔h8 26 ♗e5!.

20 ♕d2! *(D)*

B



White cannot claim any true compensation for the pawn; he is obviously worse. However, Black now begins to play terribly.

20...♘f6?

The plan with e4-e5 should have been prevented by 20...♘c7! 21 e4 (or 21 f4 f6 22 ♘f3 f5!) 21...f6!, and after 22 ♘f3 Black has enough time to prepare to meet any action by White.

21 e4!

After this White starts to develop real activity.

21...♘bd7

21...h6 22 ♘f3 ♘xe4 23 ♕xh6 is also dangerous for Black.

22 ♖fe1! h6?

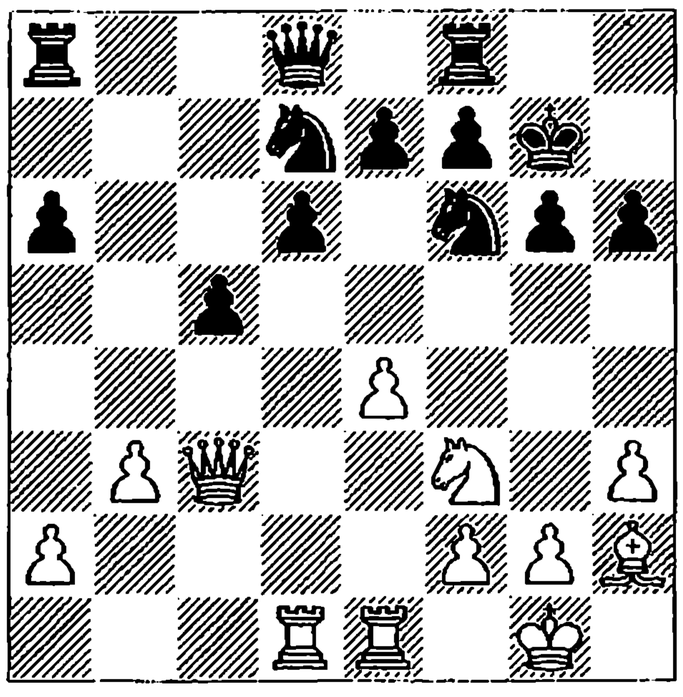
Another bad move. Almost anything else would be stronger.

23 ♘f3 ♔g7

23...♔h7 24 ♗f4 Black is forced to defend the pawn by 24...♘g8.

24 ♕c3 *(D)*

B



In four moves, the position has changed dramatically. Despite being a pawn down, White is clearly better as his pieces are cooperating ideally. So what happened to Black? Was he just a silly player? (Well, to some extent it is true.) But even in that Category 14 Alushta tournament I scored a decent '–1', which is not too bad. A loss of concentration was the real problem. The opening developed much more favourably for Black than he could expect, and he became relaxed too early.

24...e5?!

Panic: Black wishes to stop e5 at any cost. Possibly I should have tried 24...♘b6!? with the idea 25 e5 ♘fd5.

25 ♖xd6

White has regained the pawn with a colossal strategic advantage. It would be correct to say that he is technically winning now.

25...♕e7 26 ♕d3!? a5 27 ♖d1 ♖a7 28 ♗g3 ♖b8 29 ♗h4 ♕e8 30 ♘d2 a4 31 ♕f3 ♘h5 32 ♘c4 axb3 33 axb3 ♖b4 34 ♖6d2 ♘f4 35 ♗g3 ♘e6 36 ♘d6 ♕f8 37 ♕xf7+?

White misses the decisive combination 37 ♘f5+! gxf5 38 ♖xd7 ♖xd7 39 ♗xe5+! ♔g8 40 ♖xd7 ♖xe4 41 ♕xf5 and gives Black an unexpected chance.

37...♕xf7 38 ♘xf7 ♔xf7 39 ♖xd7+ ♖xd7 40 ♖xd7+ ♔f6 41 f3 ♖d4?

After 41...♖xb3! 42 ♖d5 ♘f4 43 ♗xf4 exf4 44 ♖xc5 ♖b1+ 45 ♔h2 it is in no way guaranteed that White will convert his extra pawn into a full point. Now Black is lost again.

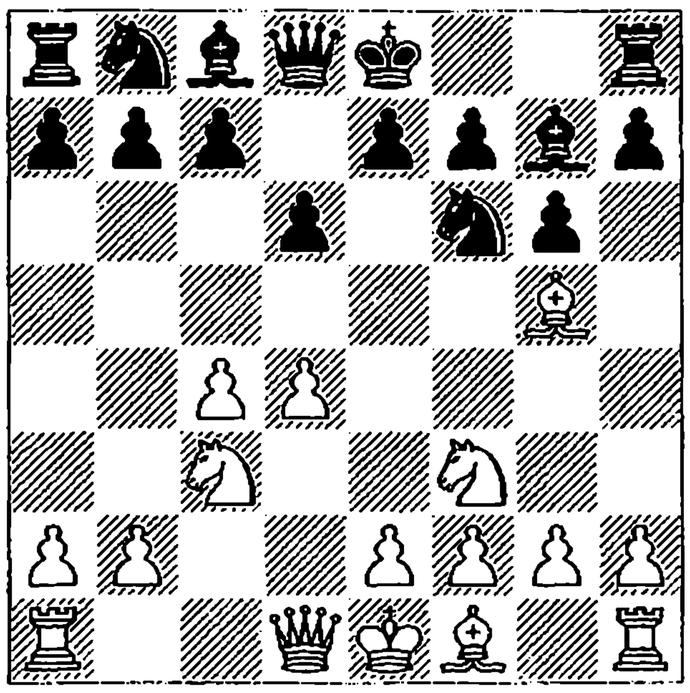
42 ♖h7 h5 43 ♗h4+! g5 44 ♖h6+! ♔e7 45 ♗g3 ♖d1+ 46 ♔h2 1-0

Game 56
Petkevich – Golubev
Groningen open 1993

1 ♘f3 ♘f6 2 c4 d6 3 d4 g6 4 ♘c3 ♗g7 5 ♗g5 *(D)*

It is worth noting that the move-order 1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 ♗g5 (instead of 4 ♘f3) allows Black to use Nataf's interesting line 4...c5 5 d5 b5!? 6 cxb5 (or 6 ♘xb5 ♘e4!) 6...a6, with complications in the spirit of the Benko Gambit.

B



The system with an early ♗g5 has always had its adherents among grandmasters. It is often linked with the name of Smyslov, who used it on many occasions. Nowadays, for example, Grandmaster Agrest plays it regularly and not without success. White can only hope for a slight advantage at best, but the line has its attractions to players with a calm, solid style, especially given that there is not much risk that White will emerge from the opening with a disadvantage.

5...h6

Black starts chasing White's bishop. Usually (and especially in later games) I have preferred other lines:

a) 5...♘bd7 6 e3 c6 7 ♗e2 a6 8 0-0 0-0 9 ♗h4 (this prophylaxis is rather unnecessary; 9 ♘d2 b5 10 ♗f3!? ♕b6 11 cxb5 axb5 12 b4 is more to the point, but also here White has no truly significant advantage, Smyslov-Larsen, Palma de Mallorca IZ 1970) 9...b5 10 ♘d2 ♖b8 11 ♗g3 bxc4 12 ♘xc4 c5 13 ♖c1 cxd4 14 exd4 ♘b6 15 ♘a5 ♗d7 16 ♗xa6 (16 d5 ♘bxd5!; 16 b4!?) 16...♖a8 17 ♕e2 ♘bd5 (17...♘a4!? 18 ♘b3 ♘xb2) 18 ♘b3 ♘b4 and Black is at least not worse, Giffard-Golubev, Le Touquet open 1995.

b) 5...0-0 6 e3 and now:

b1) 6...c5 and then:

b11) 7 ♗e2 cxd4!? (Gallagher recommends 7...h6 8 ♗h4 ♗f5) 8 exd4 (after 8 ♘xd4 ♕a5! White is virtually forced to exchange his bishop: 9 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 10 0-0 with an equal position, Sviriov-Golubev, Alushta 1999) 8...h6! 9 ♗f4 (or 9 ♗h4 ♘h5 10 0-0 f5! – Epishin) 9...♗f5 10 0-0 ♘e4 11 ♘xe4 ♗xe4 12 ♕d2 g5 13 ♗e3 e6! with good play for Black, Smyslov-Epishin, Rostov 1993.

b12) 7 d5 h6 8 ♗h4 is more ambitious. Then Black's sharpest reply is 8...g5!? 9 ♗g3 ♘h5 and after 10 ♗d3 f5 11 ♘d2 ♘xg3 12 hxg3 (I.Sokolov-Radjabov, Sarajevo 2002), Sokolov's suggestion 12...♘d7 is correct, with reasonable chances.

b2) 6...c6 7 ♕c2 (7 ♗e2 a6 8 0-0 b5 9 a3 ♘bd7 10 ♕c2 ♘b6 11 c5 dxc5 12 dxc5 ♘bd5 13 ♖fd1 ♕c7 14 ♘xd5 ½-½ V.Alekseev-Golubev, Alushta 1999) 7...a6 8 ♖d1 b5 9 ♗e2 ♘bd7 10 b3 and now:

b21) 10...b4?! seems to be a strategic mistake: Meinsohn-Golubev, Geneva open 1993 continued 11 ♘a4 h6 12 ♗h4 ♘b6 13 ♘xb6 ♕xb6 14 0-0 ♕a5 15 ♘e1 ♗f5 16 ♗d3 ♗xd3 17 ♘xd3 g5 18 ♗g3 ♘e4 19 f3 ♘xg3 20 hxg3 f5 21 c5 d5 22 f4! e6 23 ♕d2 ♖ab8 24 a3! ♕xa3 25 ♖a1 ♕xb3 26 ♖fc1!, intending to trap the queen by ♖c2 and ♘c1. After 26...gxf4 27 gxf4 e5 28 fxe5 h5, preparing ...♗h6, White missed 29 ♖xa6! with a clear advantage.

b22) After 10...bxc4!? 11 bxc4 c5, Torre-Istratescu, Erevan OL 1996 continued 12 d5 ♕a5 13 ♘d2 h6 14 ♗h4 ♖b8 15 0-0 g5 16 ♗g3 ♘h5! 17 ♗xh5 ½-½.

6 ♗h4 g5!? 7 ♗g3 ♘h5 8 e3 e6

The active alternative 8...c5!? has been known since two games from the 1959 Candidates tournament. Then the most important continuation seems to be 9 d5 ♕a5 10 ♕c2 ♘d7 11 ♗e2 ♘b6!?, as in Yusupov-Ivanchuk, Dortmund 19

98.

9 ♗e2

9 ♘d2!? ♘xg3 10 hxg3 c5 11 dxc5 dxc5 (Smyslov-Quinteros, Dortmund 1986) and now 12 ♕c2!? followed by 0-0-0 deserves attention.

9...♕e7

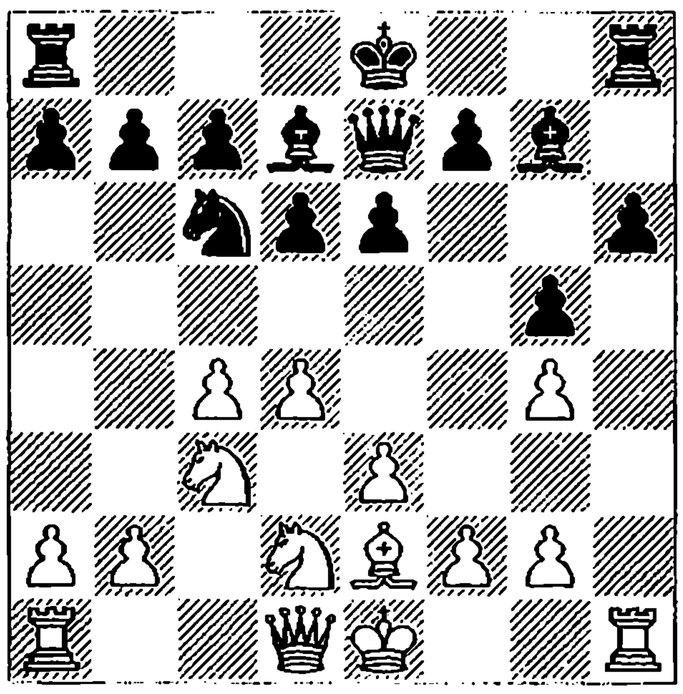
9...♘d7!? is certainly a decent move here.

10 ♘d2 ♘xg3 11 hxg3 ♘c6

It seems that 11...♘d7!? is stronger, planning either ...♘f6 or ...c5.

12 g4 ♗d7 *(D)*

W



I was quite satisfied at this moment: I had arranged my pieces in accordance with what I had learned in some book many years earlier, and remembered that I defeated Vladimir Piatsky in a similar way in one of the Odessa junior tournaments (alas the score of game was not preserved by me). However, my mood was soon to change...

13 a3! 0-0-0

What else?

14 b4

Around here I started to dislike my position more and more. White has a clear plan – pushing his pawns and attacking my queenside. I was not able to find any realistic antidote.

14...♖df8 15 b5 ♘d8

After 15...♘a5 White can try 16 ♕a4 b6 17 ♘b3 ♘xb3 18 ♕xb3 and then a4-a5.

16 a4 c5?

This appears to be a decisive mistake. The only chance for counter-activity was the pawn sacrifice 16...e5!? 17 d5 h5 followed by ...♗f4 and ...f5. It is hard to be sure that Black obtains adequate counterplay in this case, but after the text-move, White opens the b-file and gradually develops a crushing attack.

17 bxc6! ♘xc6 18 a5 f5 19 a6 b6 20 ♘b5 ♔b8

Or 20...f4 21 ♘e4!.

21 ♕b3 fxg4 22 ♗xg4 h5 23 ♗e2 g4 24 ♕a3

24 ♘e4 is also good.

24...d5 25 c5! g3 26 f4 e5

Desperation. But after 26...bxc5 27 ♖b1 ♘b4 28 0-0! White's king is safe, because ...♕h4 is always parried by ♘f3. Meanwhile the plight of the black king is pitiful.

27 fxe5 bxc5 28 ♖b1 ♘b4 29 ♘d6 ♔a8 30 ♕c3 ♗a4

Black has created a threat (31...♘c2+), but his activity cannot last for long.

31 ♗f3! ♕g5 32 ♖xb4 cxb4?

32...♖xf3 33 ♘xf3 cxb4 34 ♘xg5!? bxc3 35 ♘e6 is hopeless for Black, but now he will simply be mated.

33 ♗xd5+ ♔b8 34 ♕xb4+ ♔c7 35 ♕b7+

35 ♘b5+! mates even faster.

35...♔d8 36 ♕c8+ ♔e7 37 ♕e6+ ♔d8 38 ♘b7+ ♔c7 39 ♕d6+ ♔c8 40 ♗e6+ 1-0

In a short and rather unusual exchange of opinions after the game, my opponent (an experienced player who went on to become World Senior Champion) said to me "You played just bad". I was not able to argue with this remark. When I looked it up in the database I found that it was not my memory that had failed me: the position after Black's 12th occurred in Doda Botvinnik, Wijk aan Zee 1969 (where White opted for the not especially dangerous 13 ♘f1) and this was no doubt the source of the recommendation that I once have seen. This brings us to the final observation in this book: chess is so complicated that nobody (not even, say, Botvinnik or Kasparov) can be trusted entirely. "How can I trust Golubev then?", the reader may ask. Well, you cannot and should not. However, please trust that I have tried to do my best

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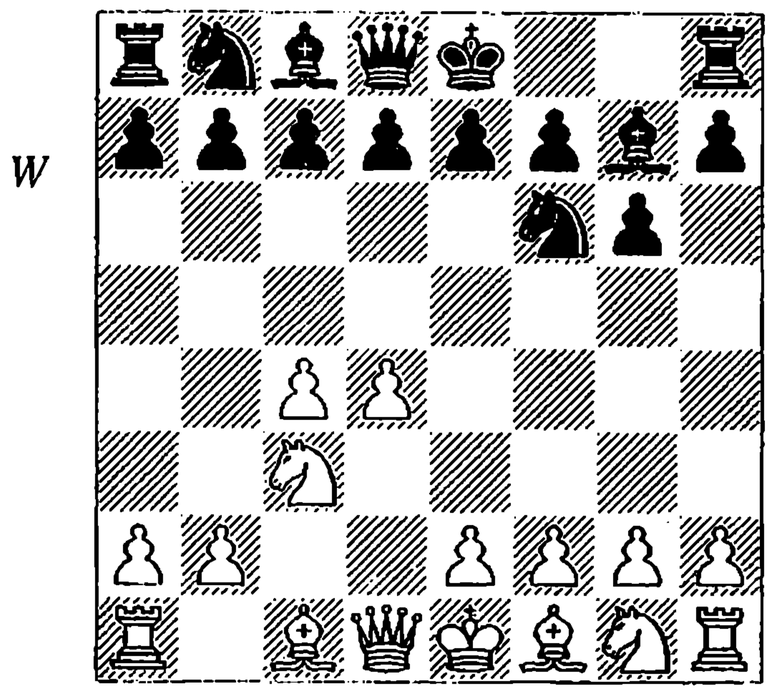
Miscellaneous Lines without 4 e4

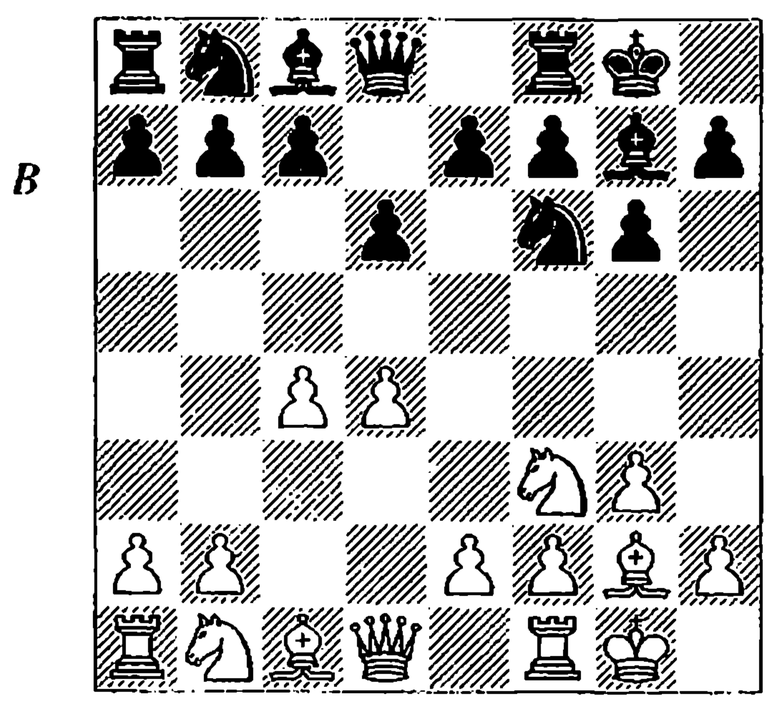
1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7



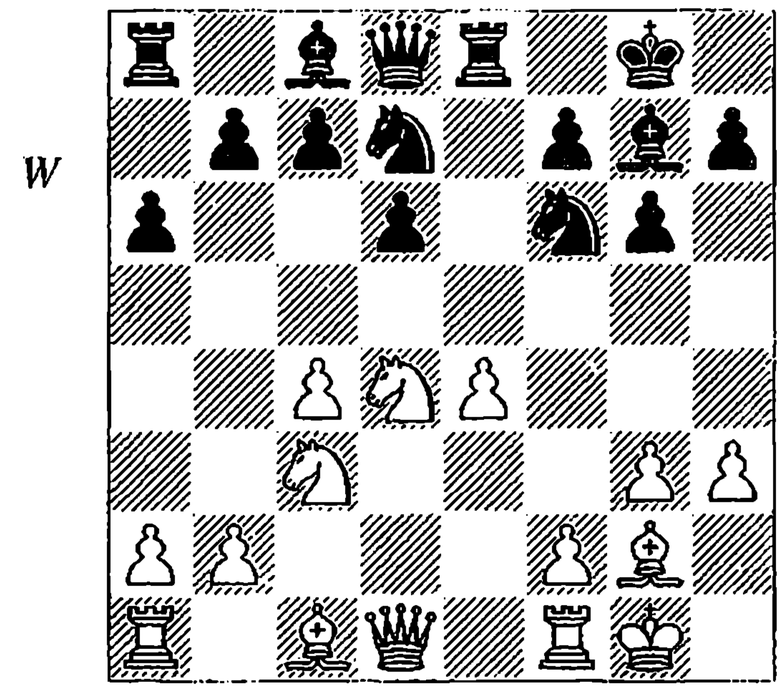
4 ♘f3 (4 ♗g5 *202*) **4...0-0**: 5 e3 *200*; 5 ♗f4 *200*; 5 ♗g5 *202*

Fianchetto

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘f3 (3 g3 ♗g7 4 ♗g2 0-0 5 ♘c3 d6: 6 e3 *173*; 6 e4 *132*) **3...♗g7 4 g3 0-0 5 ♗g2 d6** *169* **6 0-0**



6...♘bd7 (6...c6 *173* 7 ♘c3 ♕a5 *177*) **7 ♘c3** (7 ♕c2 e5 8 ♖d1 *173*) **7...e5 8 e4** (8 d5?! *170*; 8 b3 *170*; 8 ♕c2 *170*; 8 h3 *185*) **8...exd4** (8...c6 *177*) **9 ♘xd4 ♖e8 10 h3** (10 b3 *181*; 10 ♗e3!? *182*; 10 ♖e1!? *181*) **10...a6!?** (10...♘c5 *185*):



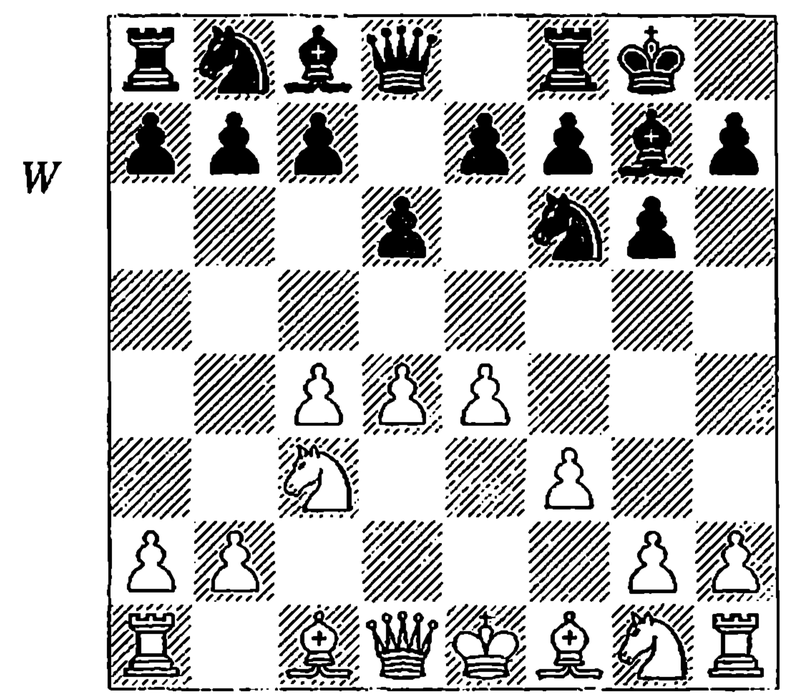
a) **11 ♗g5** *187*

b) **11 ♖e1 ♖b8** *188* **12 ♖b1!** *189* (12 ♗e3 *188*; 12 b3!? *188*; 12 a4 *188*): 12...c5 *189*; 12...♘e5 *189*; 12...♘c5 *191*

c) **11 ♗e3 ♖b8** *193* (11...♘e5?! *194*): 12 a4!? *193*; 12 ♖c1!? *195*; 12 ♕c2 *194*; 12 b3! *196*

Sämisch

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 5 f3 *143* **5...0-0** (5...a6!? *147*):

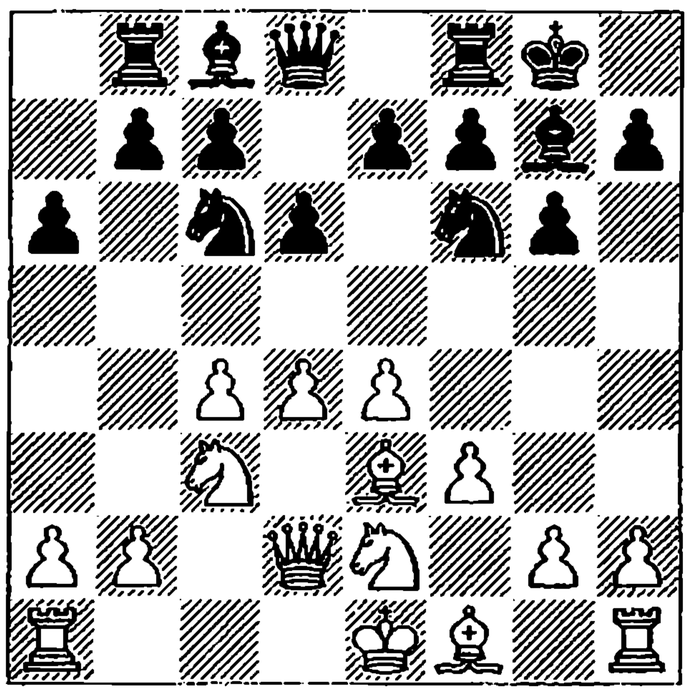


a) **6 ♘ge2** *165*

b) **6 ♗g5** *165* **6...♘c6** (6...a6 7 ♕d2 ♘bd7 *165*) **7 ♘ge2** *166* **7...a6 8 ♕d2 ♖b8 9 0-0-0** *166* (9 d5!? *166*; 9 ♗h6 *154*; 9 h4 h5 *167* 10 ♗h6 *155*)

c) **6 ♗e3 ♘c6** *143* (6...a6!? *147*; 6...c5 *163*) **7 ♘ge2** (*7 ♗d3?! 144*; 7 ♕d2 *144*) **7...a6** *144* **8 ♕d2** *148* (8 ♖b1 *144*; 8 ♘c1 *144*; 8 h4!? *144*; 8 d5 *145*; 8 a3 *144*) **8...♖b8** *148* (8...♖e8!? *160*)

W

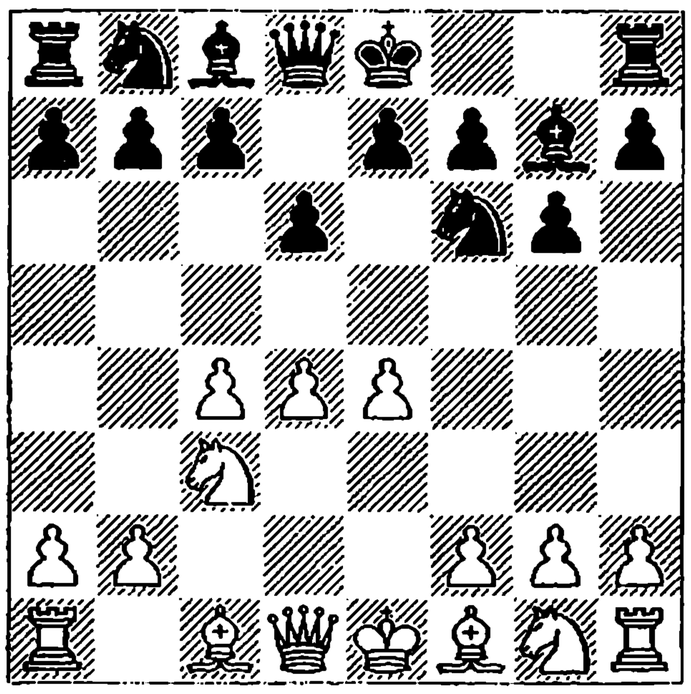


9 h4 *149* (9 ♘c1 *149*; 9 0-0-0 *149*; 9 ♗h6 *154*; 9 ♖c1 *157*; 9 a3 *158*; 9 ♖b1 *157*) **9...h5** *149* **10 ♘c1!?** *149* (10 ♘d5 *149*; 10 0-0-0 *149*; 10 ♗h6 *155*)

Non-Classical Lines with 4 e4

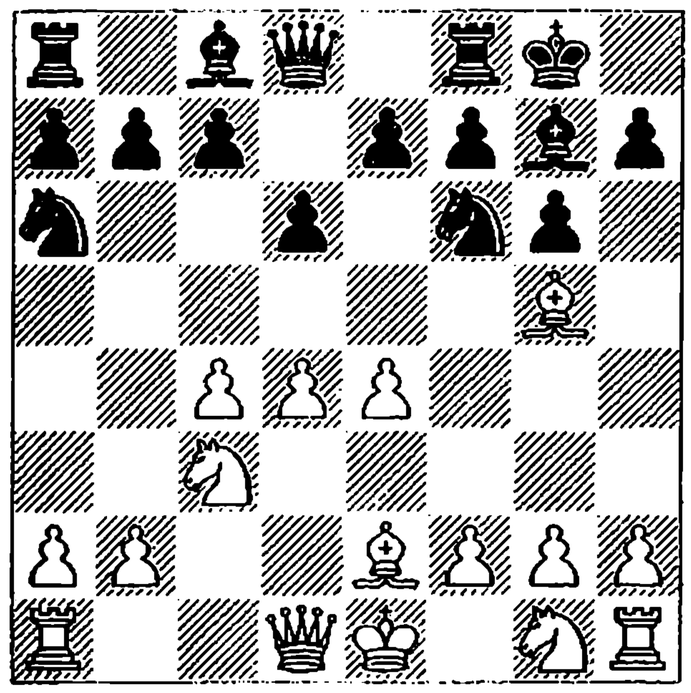
1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6:

W



a) **5 g3** *132* **5...0-0 6 ♗g2** *132*
b) **5 ♗g5!?** *121*
c) **5 ♘ge2** *135*
d) **5 ♗d3** *138*
e) **5 h3 0-0 6 ♗g5** *102*
f) **5 ♘f3 0-0 6 h3** *93* (6 ♗g5 *122*) **6...e5** *93* (6...♘a6!? *94*; 6...c5 7 d5 a6 8 a4 e6 9 ♗d3 *100*) **7 d5** (7 dxe5 *94*): 7...♘bd7 *95*; 7...a5 *95*; 7...♘h5 *97*; 7...♘a6 *95*
g) **5 f4 0-0 6 ♘f3 ♘a6!?** (6...c5 *124* 7 d5 e6 8 ♗e2 exd5 *125* 9 cxd5 *126*): 7 e5!? *126*; 7 ♗d3 *129*; 7 ♗e2 *129*
h) **5 ♗e2 0-0 6 ♗g5** *107* (6 g4?! *122*; 6 ♗e3!? *122*) **6...♘a6** *112* (6...h6 *116*; 6...c5 *107*; 6...♘bd7 *122* 7 ♕d2 e5 8 d5 ♘c5 *123*)

W

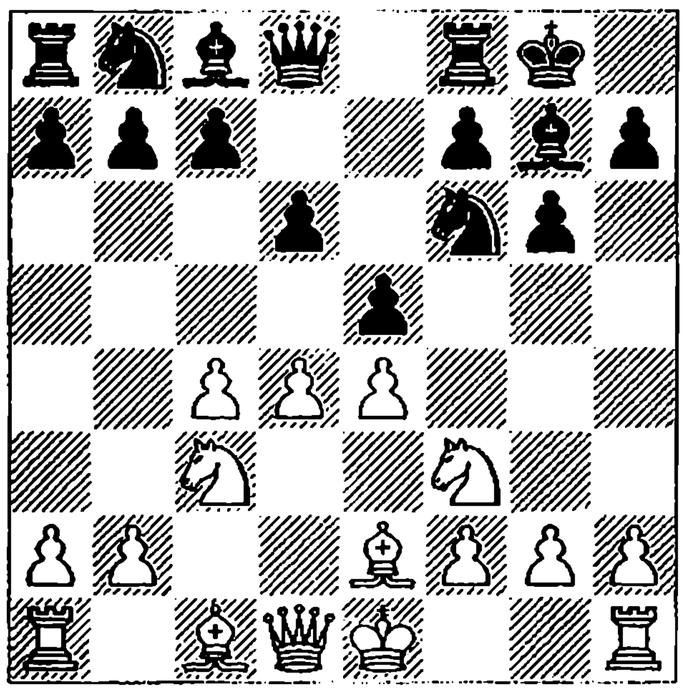


7 ♕d2 *112* (7 ♘f3 *112*; 7 ♕c2!? *112*; 7 f4!? *118*; 7 **h4** *116* 7...e5 8 d5 h6 9 ♗e3 ♘c5 *116*) **7...e5** *113* (7...♕e8!? *113*) **8 d5 c6** *114* (8...♕e8 *114*; 8...♘c5 *123*)

Classical Lines without 7 0-0 ♘c6

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 5 ♘f3 0-0 6 ♗e2 *9* **6...e5** (6...♘a6!? *82*) and now:

W

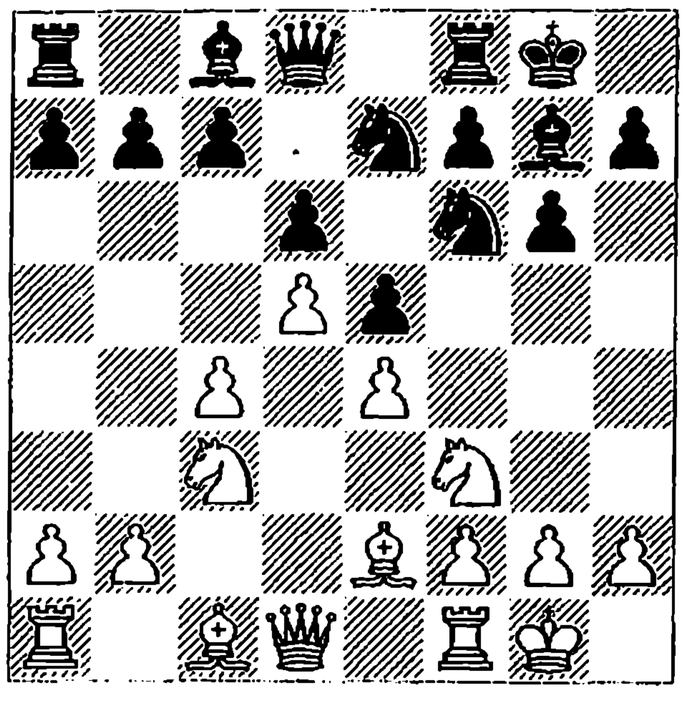


a) **7 dxe5** *84* **7...dxe5 8 ♕xd8 ♖xd8 9 ♗g5** *84*: 9...♘a6?! *89*; 9...♘bd7 *89*; 9...♖f8!? *84*; 9...♖e8 *84*; 9...c6!? *85*
b) **7 d5** *75*: 7...♘bd7 *79*; 7...♘h5 *79*; 7...♕e8!? *79*; 7...♘a6!? 8 ♘d2!? *82*; 7...a5 *75*
c) **7 0-0 exd4** *55* (7...♘a6 *54*; 7...a5!? *55*; 7...♘bd7 *55*; 7...♕e8 *55*) **8 ♘xd4 ♖e8 9 f3 ♘c6 10 ♗e3** *59*
d) **7 ♗e3** *57* **7...♘a6** *66* (7...c6 *58*; 7...♘g4 *62*; 7...h6!? *62*; 7...exd4 *57* 8 ♘xd4 ♖e8 9 f3 ♘c6!? 10 0-0 *59*) **8 0-0** *66* (8 d5 *66*; 8 dxe5!? *72*)

Classical Main Line (7 0-0 ♘c6)

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 5 ♘f3 0-0 6 ♗e2 e5 7 0-0 ♘c6 8 d5 (8 dxe5 *55*; 8 ♗e3 *55*) **8...♘e7**:

W



a) **9 a4** *27*
b) **9 ♘e1** *9* **9...♘d7** *9*:
b1) **10 ♘d3 f5** *11* **11 ♗d2** *11* (11 g4!? *10*; 11 f3 *16* 11...f4 12 b4!? *16*) **11...♘f6 12 f3** *12* **12...f4** *12* **13 c5 g5** *13*
b2) **10 ♗e3** *18* **10...f5 11 f3 f4 12 ♗f2 g5** *18* **13 a4** *23* (13 ♘b5 *19*): 13...♘g6 *24* 14 a5! *24*; 13...a5 *27*
c) **9 ♘d2** *32* **9...♘e8** *34* (9...♘d7 *34*; 9...a5 *32*) **10 b4! f5 11 c5** *34* **11...♘f6 12 f3 f4 13 ♘c4 g5** *35*: 14 ♗a3!? *35*; 14 a4 *39*
d) **9 b4** *32*:
d1) **9...a5** *41* **10 ♗a3!** *41*
d2) **9...♘e8 10 c5 f5** *38* **11 ♘d2 ♘f6 12 f3 f4 13 ♘c4 g5** *35*: 14 ♗a3!? *35*; 14 a4 *39*
d3) **9...♘h5** *43* **10 ♖e1!** *46* (10 g3 *43*; 10 c5!? *44*) **10...♘f4** *46* (10...a5!? *46*; 10...f5 *47*; 10...♔h8!? *51*) **11 ♗f1** *49*